IN·THE MIDST ·OF· ALARMS

ROBERT·BARR

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IN THE MIDST OF ALARMS

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BY

ROBERT BARR

AUTHOR OF
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TO

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IN THE MIDST OF ALARMS

CHAPTER I

IN the marble-floored vestibule of the Metropolitan Grand Hotel in Buffalo, Professor Stillson Renmark stood and looked about him with the anxious manner of a person unused to the gaudy splendour of the modern American house of entertainment. The professor had paused halfway between the door and the marble counter, because he began to fear that he had arrived at an inopportune time — that something unusual was going on. The hurry and bustle bewildered him.

An omnibus, partly filled with passengers, was standing at the door, its steps backed over the kerbstone, and beside it was a broad, flat van, on which stalwart porters were heaving great square iron-bound trunks belonging to commercial travellers, and the more fragile but not less bulky

saratogas, doubtless the property of the ladies who sat patiently in the omnibus. Another vehicle, which had just arrived, was backing up to the kerb, and the irate driver used language suitable to the occasion; for the two restive horses were not behaving exactly in the way he liked.

A man, with a stentorian but monotonous and mournful voice, was filling the air with the information that a train was about to depart for Albany, Saratoga, Troy, Boston, New York, and the East. When he came to the words "the East," his voice dropped to a sad minor key, as if the man despaired of the fate of those who took their departure in that direction. Every now and then a brazen gong sounded sharply; and one of the negroes, who sat in a row on a bench along the marble-panelled wall, sprang forward to the counter, took somebody's handbag, and disappeared in the direction of the elevator, with the newly-arrived guest following him. Groups of men stood here and there conversing, heedless of the rush of arrival and departure around them.

Before the broad and lofty plate-glass windows sat a row of men, some talking, some reading, and some gazing outside, but all with their feet on the brass rail, which had been apparently put there for that purpose. Nearly everybody was smoking a cigar. A lady of dignified mien came down the hall to the front of the counter, and spoke quietly

to the clerk, who bent his well-groomed head deferentially on one side as he listened to what she had to say. The men instantly made way for her. She passed along among them as composedly as if she were in her own drawing-room, inclining her head slightly to one or other of her acquaintances, which salutation was gravely acknowledged by the raising of the hat and the temporary removal of the cigar from the lips.

All this was very strange to the professor, and he felt himself in a new world, with whose customs he was not familiar. Nobody paid the slightest attention to him as he stood there amongst it all, with his satchel in his hand. As he timidly edged up to the counter, and tried to accumulate courage enough to address the clerk, a young man came forward, flung his handbag on the polished top of the counter, metaphorically brushed the professor aside, pulled the bulky register towards him, and inscribed his name on the page, with a rapidity equalled only by the illegibility of the result.

"Hello, Sam," he said to the clerk. "How's things? Get my telegram?"

"Yes," answered the clerk; "but I can't give you 27. It's been taken for a week. I reserved 85 for you, and had to hold on with my teeth to do that."

The reply of the young man was merely a brief mention of the place of torment.

"It *is* hot," said the clerk blandly. "In from Cleveland?"

"Yes. Any letters for me?"

"Couple of telegrams. You'll find them up in 85."

"Oh, you were cock-sure I'd take that room?"

"I was cock-sure you'd have to. It is either that or the fifth floor. We're full. Couldn't give a better room to the President if he came."

"Oh, well, what's good enough for the President, I can put up with for a couple of days."

The hand of the clerk descended on the bell. The negro sprang forward and took the "grip." "Eighty-five," said the clerk; and the drummer and the negro disappeared.

"Is there any place where I could leave my bag for a while?" the professor at last said timidly to the clerk.

"Your bag?"

The professor held it up in view.

"Oh, your grip. Certainly. Have a room, sir?" And the clerk's hand hovered over the bell.

"No. At least, not just yet. You see, I'm"—

"All right. The baggage-man there to the left will check it for you."

"Any letters for Bond?" said a man, pushing himself in front of the professor. The clerk pulled out a fat bunch of letters from the compartment marked "B," and handed the whole lot to the

inquirer, who went rapidly over them, selected two that appeared to be addressed to him, and gave the letters a push towards the clerk, who placed them where they were before.

The professor paused a moment, then, realising that the clerk had forgotten him, sought the baggage-man, whom he found in a room filled with trunks and valises. The room communicated with the great hall by means of a square opening, whose lower ledge was breast high. The professor stood before it, and handed the valise to the man behind this opening, who rapidly attached one brass check to the handle with a leather thong, and flung the other piece of brass to the professor. The latter was not sure but there was something to pay, still he quite correctly assumed that if there had been, the somewhat brusque man would have had no hesitation in mentioning the fact; in which surmise his natural common sense proved a sure guide among strange surroundings. There was no false delicacy about the baggage-man.

Although the professor was to a certain extent bewildered by the condition of things, there was still in his nature a certain dogged persistence that had before now stood him in good stead, and which had enabled him to distance, in the long run, much more brilliant men. He was not at all satisfied with his brief interview with the clerk. He resolved to approach that busy individual again, if he could

arrest his attention. It was some time before he caught the Speaker's eye, as it were, but when he did so, he said—

"I was about to say to you, that I am waiting for a friend from New York who may not yet have arrived. His name is Mr. Richard Yates, of the"—

"Oh, Dick Yates! Certainly. He's here." Turning to the negro, he said, "Go down to the billiard-room and see if Mr. Yates is there. If he is not, look for him at the bar."

The clerk evidently knew Mr. Dick Yates. Apparently not noticing the look of amazement that had stolen over the professor's face, the clerk said—

"If you wait in the reading-room, I'll send Yates to you when he comes. The boy will find him, if he's in the house; but he may be up-town."

The professor, disliking to trouble the obliging clerk further, did not ask him where the reading-room was. He inquired, instead, of a hurrying porter, and received the curt but comprehensive answer—

"Dining-room next floor. Reading, smoking, and writing-rooms up the hall. Billiard-room, bar, and lavatory downstairs."

The professor, after getting into the barber-shop and the cigar store, finally found his way into the reading-room. Numerous daily papers were scattered around on the table, each attached to a long

clumsy cleft holder made of wood; while other journals, similarly encumbered, hung from racks against the wall. The professor sat down in one of the easy leather-covered chairs, but, instead of taking up a paper, drew a thin book from his pocket, in which he was soon so absorbed that he became entirely unconscious of his strange surroundings. A light touch on the shoulder brought him up from his book into the world again, and he saw, looking down on him, the stern face of a heavily-moustached stranger.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but may I ask if you are a guest of this house?"

A shade of apprehension crossed the professor's face, as he slipped the book into his pocket. He had vaguely felt that he was trespassing when he first entered the hotel, and now his doubts were confirmed.

"I—I am not exactly a guest," he stammered.

"What do you mean by not exactly a guest?" continued the other, regarding the professor with a cold and scrutinising gaze. "A man is either a guest or he is not, I take it. Which is it in your case?"

"I presume, technically speaking, I am not."

"Technically speaking! More evasions. Let me ask you, sir, as an ostensibly honest man, if you imagine that all this luxury — this — this elegance—is maintained for nothing? Do you

think, sir, that it is provided for any man who has cheek enough to step out of the street and enjoy it? Is it kept up, I ask, for people who are, technically speaking, not guests?"

The expression of conscious guilt deepened on the face of the unfortunate professor. He had nothing to say. He realised that his conduct was too flagrant to admit of defence, so he attempted none. Suddenly the countenance of his questioner lit up with a smile, and he smote the professor on the shoulder.

"Well, old stick-in-the-mud, you haven't changed a particle in fifteen years. You don't mean to pretend you don't know me?"

"You can't—you can't be Richard Yates?"

"I not only can, but I can't be anybody else. I know, because I have often tried. Well, well, well, well! Stilly we used to call you; don't you remember? I'll never forget that time we sang 'Oft in the stilly night' front of your window, when you were studying for the exams. You always *were* a quiet fellow, Stilly. I've been waiting for you nearly a whole day. I was up just now with a party of friends, when the boy brought me your card — a little philanthropic gathering — sort of mutual benefit arrangement, you know: each of us contributed what we could spare to a general fund, which was given to some deserving person in the crowd."

"Yes," said the professor drily. "I heard the clerk telling the boy where he would be most likely to find you."

"Oh, you did, eh?" cried Yates, with a laugh. "Yes, Sam generally knows where to send for me; but he needn't have been so darned public about it. Being a newspaper-man, I know what ought to go in print and what should have the blue pencil run through it. Sam is very discreet, as a general thing; but then he knew, of course, the moment he set eyes on you, that you were an old pal of mine."

Again Yates laughed, a very bright and cheery laugh for so evidently wicked a man.

"Come along," he said, taking the professor by the arm. "We must get you located."

They passed out into the hall, and drew up at the clerk's counter.

"I say, Sam," cried Yates, "can't you do something better for us than the fifth floor? I didn't come to Buffalo to engage in ballooning. No sky-parlours for me, if I can help it."

"I'm sorry, Dick," said the clerk; "but I expect the fifth floor will be gone when the Chicago express gets in."

"Well, what can you do for us, anyhow?"

"I can let you have 518. That's the next room to yours. Really, they're the most comfortable rooms in the house this weather. Fine lookout

over the lake. I wouldn't mind having a sight of the lake myself, if I could leave the desk."

"All right. But I didn't come to look at the lake, nor yet at the railroad-tracks this side, nor at Buffalo Creek either, beautiful and romantic as it is, nor to listen to the clanging of the ten thousand locomotives that pass within hearing distance, for the delight of your guests. The fact is, that, always excepting Chicago, Buffalo is more like—for the professor's sake I'll say Hades, than any other place in America."

"Oh, Buffalo's all right," said the clerk, with that feeling of local loyalty which all Americans possess. "Say, are you here on this Fenian snap?"

"What Fenian snap?" asked the newspaper-man.

"Oh! don't you know about it? I thought, the moment I saw you, that you were here for this affair. Well, don't say I told you, but I can put you on to one of the big guns if you want the particulars. They say they're going to take Canada. I told 'em that I wouldn't take Canada as a gift, let alone fight for it. I've *been* there."

Yates's newspaper instinct thrilled him as he thought of the possible sensation. Then the light slowly died out of his eyes when he looked at the professor, who had flushed somewhat and compressed his lips, as he listened to the slighting remarks on his country.

"Well, Sam," said the newspaper-man at last, "it isn't more than once in a lifetime that you'll find me give the go-by to a piece of news, but the fact is, I'm on my vacation just now. About the first I've had for fifteen years; so you see, I must take care of it. No, let the *Argus* get scooped, if it wants to. They'll value my services all the more when I get back. No. 518, I think you said?"

The clerk handed over the key, and the professor gave the boy the check for his valise, at Yates's suggestion.

"Now, get a move on you," said Yates to the elevator-boy. "We're going right through with you."

And so the two friends were shot up together to the fifth floor.

CHAPTER II

THE sky-parlour, as Yates had termed it, certainly commanded a very extensive view. Immediately underneath was a wilderness of roofs. Farther along were the railway-tracks that Yates objected to; and a line of masts and propellor-funnels marked the windings of Buffalo Creek, along whose banks arose numerous huge elevators, each marked by some tremendous letter of the alphabet, done in white paint against the sombre brown of the big building. Still farther to the west was a more grateful and comforting sight for a hot day. The blue lake, dotted with white sails and an occasional trail of smoke, lay shimmering under the broiling sun. Over the water, through the distant summer haze, there could be seen the dim line of the Canadian shore.

"Sit you down," cried Yates, putting both hands on the other's shoulders, and pushing him into a chair near the window. Then, placing his finger on the electric button, he added, "What will you drink?"

"I'll take a glass of water, if it can be had without trouble," said Renmark.

Yates's hand dropped from the electric button hopelessly to his side, and he looked reproachfully at the professor.

"Great heavens!" he cried, "have something mild. Don't go rashly in for Buffalo water before you realise what it is made of. Work up to it gradually. Try a sherry cobbler or a milk shake as a starter."

"Thank you, no. A glass of water will do very well for me. Order what you like for yourself."

"Thanks, I can be depended on for doing that." He pushed the button, and, when the boy appeared, said, "Bring up an iced cobbler, and charge it to Professor Renmark, No. 518. Bring also a pitcher of ice-water for Yates, No. 520. There," he continued gleefully, "I'm going to have all the drinks, except the ice-water, charged to you. I'll pay the bill, but I'll keep the account, to hold over your head in the future. Prof. Stillson Renmark, debtor to Metropolitan Grand—one sherry cobbler—one gin sling—one whisky cocktail, and so on. Now then, Stilly, let's talk business. You're not married, I take it, or you wouldn't have responded to my invitation so promptly." The professor shook his head. "Neither am I. You never had the courage to propose to a girl; and I never had the time."

"Lack of self-conceit was not your failing in the old days, Richard," said Renmark quietly.

Yates laughed. "Well, it didn't hold me back

any, to my knowledge. Now I'll tell you how I've got along since we attended old Scragmore's academy together, fifteen years ago. How time does fly! When I left, I tried teaching for one short month. I had some theories on the education of our youth which did not seem to chime in with the prejudices the school trustees had already formed on the subject."

The professor was at once all attention. Touch a man on his business, and he generally responds by being interested.

"And what were your theories?" he asked.

"Well, I thought a teacher should look after the physical as well as the mental welfare of his pupils. It did not seem to me that his duty to those under his charge ended with mere book-learning."

"I quite agree with you," said the professor cordially.

"Thanks. Well, the trustees didn't. I joined the boys at their games, hoping my example would have an influence on their conduct on the playground as well as in the schoolroom. We got up a rattling good cricket club. You may not remember that I stood rather better in cricket, at the academy, than I did in mathematics or grammar. By handicapping me with several poor players, and having the best players among the boys in opposition, we made a pretty evenly matched team at school-section No. 12. One day, at noon, we began

a game. The grounds were in excellent condition, and the opposition boys were at their best. My side was getting the worst of it. I was very much interested; and when one o'clock came, I thought it a pity to call school and spoil so good and interesting a contest. The boys were unanimously of the same opinion. The girls were happy, picnicking under the trees. So we played cricket all the afternoon."

"I think that was carrying your theory a little too far," said the professor dubiously.

"Just what the trustees thought, when they came to hear of it. So they dismissed me; and I think my leaving was the only case on record where the pupils genuinely mourned a teacher's departure. I shook the dust of Canada from my feet, and have never regretted it. I tramped to Buffalo, continuing to shake the dust off at every step. (Hello! here's your drinks at last, Stilly. I had forgotten about them,—an unusual thing with me. That's all right, boy; charge it to room 518. Ah! that hits the spot on a hot day.) Well, where was I? Oh yes, at Buffalo. I got a place on a paper here, at just enough to keep life in me; but I liked the work. Then I drifted to Rochester at a bigger salary, afterwards to Albany at a still bigger salary, and of course Albany is only a few hours from New York, and that is where all newspaper-men ultimately land, if they are worth their

salt. I saw a small section of the war as special correspondent, got hurt, and rounded up in the hospital. Since then, although only a reporter, I am about the top of the tree in that line, and make enough money to pay my poker debts and purchase iced drinks to soothe the asperities of the game. When there is anything big going on anywhere in the country, I am there, with other fellows to do the drudgery; I writing the picturesque descriptions and interviewing the big men. My stuff goes red-hot over the telegraph-wire, and the humble postage-stamp knows my envelopes no more. I am acquainted with every hotel clerk that amounts to anything, from New York to San Francisco. If I could save money I should be rich, for I make plenty; but the hole at the top of my trousers-pocket has lost me a lot of cash, and I don't seem to be able to get it mended. Now, you've listened with your customary patience, in order to give my self-esteem, as you called it, full sway. I am grateful. I will reciprocate. How about yourself?"

The professor spoke slowly. "I have had no such adventurous career," he began. "I have not shaken Canadian dust from my feet, and have not made any great success. I have simply plodded; and am in no danger of becoming rich, although I suppose I spend as little as any man. After you were expel—after you left the aca—"

"Don't mutilate the good old English language

Stilly. You were right in the first place. I am not thin-skinned. You were saying, after I was expelled. Go on."

"I thought perhaps it might be a sore subject. You remember, you were very indignant at the time, and"—

"Of course I was,—and am still, for that matter. It was an outrage."

"I thought it was proved that you helped to put the pony in the principal's room."

"Oh, certainly. *That.* Of course. But what I detested was the way the principal worked the thing. He allowed that villain Spink to turn evidence against us, and Spink stated I originated the affair, whereas I could claim no such honour. It was Spink's own project, which I fell in with, as I did with every disreputable thing proposed. Of course, the principal believed at once that I was the chief criminal. Do you happen to know if Spink has been hanged yet?"

"I believe he is a very reputable business-man in Montreal, and much respected."

"I might have suspected that. Well, you keep your eye on the respected Spink. If he doesn't fail some day, and make a lot of money, I'm a Dutchman. But go on. This is digression. By the way, just push that electric button. You're nearest, and it is too hot to move. Thanks. After I was expelled"—

"After your departure, I took a diploma, and for a year or two taught a class in the academy. Then, as I studied during my spare time, I got a chance as master of a grammar-school near Toronto, chiefly, as I think, through the recommendation of Principal Scragmore. I had my degree by this time. Then"—

There was a gentle tap at the door.

"Come in," shouted Yates. "Oh, it's you. Just bring up another cooling cobbler, will you; and charge it, as before, to Professor Renmark, room 518.—Yes; and then"—

"And then there came the opening in University College, Toronto. I had the good fortune to be appointed. There I am still, and there I suppose I shall stay. I know very few people, and am better acquainted with books than with men. Those whom I have the privilege of knowing are mostly studious persons, who have made, or will make, their mark in the world of learning. I have not had your advantage, of meeting statesmen who guide the destinies of a great empire."

"No; you always were lucky, Stilly. My experience is, that the chaps who do the guiding are more anxious about their own pockets, or their own political advancement, than they are of the destinies. Still, the empire seems to take its course westward just the same. So old Scragmore's been your friend, has he?"

"He has, indeed."

"Well, he insulted me only the other day."

"You astonish me. I cannot imagine so gentlemanly and scholarly a man as Principal Scragmore insulting anybody."

"Oh, you don't know him as I do. It was like this. I wanted to find out where you were, for reasons that I shall state hereafter. I cudgelled my brains, and then thought of old Scrag. I wrote him, and enclosed a stamped and addressed envelope, as all unsought contributors should do. He answered—but I have his reply somewhere. You shall read it for yourself."

Yates pulled from his inside pocket a bundle of letters, which he hurriedly fingered over, commenting in a low voice as he did so, "I thought I answered that. Still, no matter. Jingo! haven't I paid that bill yet. This pass is run out. Must get another." Then he smiled and sighed, as he looked at a letter in dainty handwriting; but apparently he could not find the document he sought.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter. I have it somewhere. He returned me the prepaid envelope, and reminded me that United States stamps were of no use in Canada, which of course I should have remembered. But he didn't pay the postage on his own letter, so that I had to fork out double. Still, I don't mind that, only as an indication of his meanness. He went on to say that, of all the

members of our class, you—*you!*—were the only one who had reflected credit on it. That was the insult. The idea of his making such a statement, when I had told him I was on the New York *Argus!* Credit to the class, indeed! I wonder if he ever heard of Brown, after he was expelled. You know, of course. No? Well, Brown, by his own exertions, became president of the Alum Bank in New York, wrecked it, and got off to Canada with a clear half-million. *Yes*, sir. I saw him in Quebec not six months ago. Keeps the finest span and carriage in the city, and lives in a palace. Could buy out old Scragmore a thousand times, and never feel it. Most liberal contributor to the cause of education that there is in Canada. He says education made him, and he's not a man to go back on education. And yet Scragmore has the cheek to say that *you* were the only man in the class who reflects credit on it!"

The professor smiled quietly, as the excited journalist took a cooling sip of the cobbler.

"You see, Yates, people's opinions differ. A man like Brown may not be Principal Scragmore's ideal. The principal may be local in his ideals of a successful man, or of one who reflects credit on his teaching."

"Local? You bet he's local. Too darned local for me. It would do that man good to live in New York for a year. But I'm going to get even with him. I'm going to write him up. I'll give

him a column and a half; see if I don't. I'll get his photograph, and publish a newspaper portrait of him. If that doesn't make him quake, he's a cast-iron man. Say, you haven't a photograph of old Scrag that you can lend me, have you?"

"I have; but I won't lend it for such a purpose. However, never mind the principal. Tell me your plans. I am at your disposal for a couple of weeks, or longer if necessary."

"Good boy! Well, I'll tell you how it is. I want rest and quiet, and the woods, for a week or two. This is how it happened. I have been steadily at the grindstone, except for a while in the hospital; and that, you will admit, is not much of a vacation. The work interests me, and I am always in the thick of it. Now, it's like this in the newspaper business: your chief is never the person to suggest that you take a vacation. He is usually short of men and long on things to do, so if you don't worry him into letting you off, he won't lose any sleep over it. He's content to let well enough alone every time. Then there is always somebody who wants to get away on pressing business,—grandmother's funeral, and that sort of thing,—so if a fellow is content to work right along, his chief is quite content to let him. That's the way affairs have gone for years with me. The other week I went over to Washington to interview a senator on the political prospects.

I tell you what it is, Stilly, without bragging, there are some big men in the States whom no one but me *can* interview. And yet old Scrag says I'm no credit to his class! Why, last year my political predictions were telegraphed all over this country, and have since appeared in the European press. No credit! By Jove, I would like to have old Scrag in a twenty-four-foot ring, with thin gloves on, for about ten minutes!"

"I doubt if he would shine under those circumstances. But never mind him. He spoke, for once, without due reflection, and with perhaps an exaggerated remembrance of your schoolday offences. What happened when you went to Washington?"

"A strange thing happened. When I was admitted to the senator's library, I saw another fellow, whom I thought I knew, sitting there. I said to the senator, 'I will come when you are alone.' The senator looked up in surprise, and said, 'I am alone.' I didn't say anything, but went on with my interview; and the other fellow took notes all the time. I didn't like this, but said nothing, for the senator is not a man to offend, and it is by not offending these fellows that I can get the information I do. Well, the other fellow came out with me, and, as I looked at him, I saw that he was myself. This did not strike me as strange at the time, but I argued with him all the way to New York, and tried to show him that

he wasn't treating me fairly. I wrote up the interview, with the other fellow interfering all the while, so I compromised, and half the time put in what he suggested, and half the time what I wanted in myself. When the political editor went over the stuff, he looked alarmed. I told him frankly just how I had been interfered with, and he looked none the less alarmed when I had finished. He sent at once for a doctor. The doctor metaphorically took me to pieces, and then said to my chief, 'This man is simply worked to death. He must have a vacation, and a real one, with absolutely nothing to think of, or he is going to collapse, and that with a suddenness which will surprise everybody.' The chief, to my astonishment, consented without a murmur, and even upbraided me for not going away sooner. Then the doctor said to me, 'You get some companion,—some man with no brains, if possible, who will not discuss politics, who has no opinion on anything that any sane man would care to talk about, and who couldn't say a bright thing if he tried for a year. Get such a man to go off to the woods somewhere. Up in Maine or in Canada. As far away from post-offices and telegraph-offices as possible. And, by the way, don't leave your address at the *Argus* office.' Thus it happened, Stilly, when he described this man so graphically, I at once thought of you."

"I am deeply gratified, I am sure," said the professor, with the ghost of a smile, "to be so promptly remembered in such a connection, and if I can be of service to you, I shall be very glad. I take it, then, that you have no intention of stopping in Buffalo?"

"You bet I haven't. I'm in for the forest primeval, the murmuring pines and the hemlock, bearded with moss and green in the something-or-other—I forget the rest. I want to quit lying on paper, and lie on my back instead, on the sward or in a hammock. I'm going to avoid all boarding-houses or delightful summer-resorts, and go in for the quiet of the forest."

"There ought to be some nice places along the lake shore."

"No, sir. No lake shore for me. It would remind me of the Lake Shore Railroad when it was calm, and of Long Branch when it was rough. *No*, sir. The woods, the woods, and the woods. I have hired a tent and a lot of cooking things. I'm going to take that tent over to Canada to-morrow; and then I propose we engage a man with a team to cart it somewhere into the woods, fifteen or twenty miles away. We shall have to be near a farmhouse, so that we can get fresh butter, milk, and eggs. This, of course, is a disadvantage; but I shall try to get near someone who has never even heard of New York."

"You may find that somewhat difficult."

"Oh, I don't know. I have great hopes of the lack of intelligence in the Canadians."

"Often the narrowest," said the professor slowly, "are those who think themselves the most cosmopolitan."

"Right you are," cried Yates, skimming lightly over the remark, and seeing nothing applicable to his case in it. "Well, I've laid in about half a ton, more or less, of tobacco, and have bought an empty jug."

"An empty one?"

"Yes. Among the few things worth having, that the Canadians possess, is good whisky. Besides, the empty jar will save trouble at the custom-house. I don't suppose Canadian rye is as good as the Kentucky article, but you and I will have to scrub along on it for a while. And talking of whisky, just press the button once again."

The professor did so, saying—

"The doctor made no remark, I suppose, about drinking less or smoking less, did he?"

"In my case? Well, come to think of it, there *was* some conversation in that direction. Don't remember at the moment just what it amounted to; but all physicians have their little fads, you know. It doesn't do to humour them too much.—Ah, boy, there you are again. Well, the professor wants another drink. Make it a gin fizz this time, and put plenty of ice in it; but don't neglect the gin on that account. Certainly: charge it to room 518."

CHAPTER III

"WHAT'S all this tackle?" asked the burly and somewhat red-faced customs-officer at Fort Erie.

"This," said Yates, "is a tent, with the poles and pegs appertaining thereto. These are a number of packages of tobacco, on which I shall doubtless have to pay something into the exchequer of Her Majesty. This is a jug used for the holding of liquids. I beg to call your attention to the fact that it is at present empty, which unfortunately prevents me making a libation to the rites of good-fellowship. What my friend has in that valise I don't know, but I suspect a gambling outfit, and would advise you to search him."

"My valise contains books principally, with some articles of wearing apparel," said the professor, opening his grip.

The customs-officer looked with suspicion on the whole outfit, and evidently did not like the tone of the American. He seemed to be treating the customs department in a light and airy manner, and the officer was too much impressed by the

dignity of his position not to resent flippancy. Besides, there were rumours of Fenian invasion in the air, and the officer resolved that no Fenian should get into the country without paying duty.

"Where are you going with this tent?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Perhaps you can tell us. I don't know the country about here. Say, Stilly, I'm off up-town to attend to the emptiness in this stone utensil. I've been empty too often myself not to sympathise with its condition. You wrestle this matter out about the tent. You know the ways of the country, whereas I don't."

It was perhaps as well that Yates left negotiations in the hands of his friend. He was quick enough to see that he made no headway with the officer, but rather the opposite. He slung the jar ostentatiously over his shoulder, to the evident discomfort of the professor, and marched up the hill to the nearest tavern, whistling one of the lately popular war-tunes.

"Now," he said to the bar-keeper, placing the jar tenderly on the bar, "fill that up to the nozzle with the best rye you have. Fill it with the old familiar juice, as the late poet Omar saith."

The bar-tender did as he was requested.

"Can you disguise a little of that fluid in any way, so that it may be taken internally without a man suspecting what he is swallowing?"

The bar-keeper smiled. "How would a cocktail fill the vacancy?"

"I can suggest nothing better," replied Yates. "If you are sure you know how to make it."

The man did not resent this imputation of ignorance. He merely said, with the air of one who gives an incontrovertible answer—

"I am a Kentucky man myself."

"Shake," cried Yates briefly, as he reached his hand across the bar. "How is it you happen to be here?"

"Well, I got into a little trouble in Louisville, and here I am, where I can at least look at God's country."

"Hold on," protested Yates. "You're making only *one* cocktail."

"Didn't you say one?" asked the man, pausing in the compounding.

"Bless you, I never saw one cocktail made in my life. You are with me on this."

"Just as you say," replied the other, as he prepared enough for two.

"Now, I'll tell you my fix," said Yates confidentially. "I've got a tent and some camp things down below at the custom-house shanty, and I want to get them taken into the woods, where I can camp out with a friend. I want a place where we can have absolute rest and quiet. Do you know the country round here? Perhaps you could recommend a spot"

"Well, for all the time I've been here, I know precious little about the back country. I've been down the road to Niagara Falls, but never back in the woods. I suppose you want some place by the lake or the river?"

"No, I don't. I want to get clear back into the forest—if there is a forest."

"Well, there's a man in to-day from somewhere near Ridgeway, I think. He's got a hay-rack with him, and that would be just the thing to take your tent and poles. Wouldn't be very comfortable travelling for you, but it would be all right for the tent, if it's a big one."

"That will suit us exactly. We don't care a cent about the comfort. Roughing it is what we came for. Where will I find him?"

"Oh, he'll be along here soon. That's his team tied there on the side-street. If he happens to be in good humour, he'll take your things, and as like as not give you a place to camp in his woods. Hiram Bartlett's his name. And, talking of the old Nick himself, here he is.—I say, Mr. Bartlett, this gentleman was wondering if you couldn't tote out some of his belongings. He's going out your way.'

Bartlett was a somewhat uncouth and wiry specimen of the Canadian farmer, who evidently paid little attention to the subject of dress. He said nothing, but looked in a lowering way at Yates, with something of contempt and suspicion in his glance.

Yates had one receipt for making the acquaintance of all mankind. "Come in, Mr. Bartlett," he said cheerily, "and try one of my friend's excellent cocktails."

"I take mine straight," growled Bartlett gruffly, although he stepped inside the open door. "I don't want no Yankee mixtures in mine. Plain whisky's good enough for any man, if he *is* a man. I don't take no water, neither. I've got trouble enough."

The bar-tender winked at Yates, as he shoved the decanter over to the new-comer.

"Right you are," assented Yates cordially.

The farmer did not thaw out in the least because of this prompt agreement with him, but sipped his whisky gloomily, as if it were a most disagreeable medicine.

"What did you want me to take out?" he said at last.

"A friend and a tent, a jug of whisky and a lot of jolly good tobacco."

"How much are you willing to pay?"

"Oh, I don't know. I'm always willing to do what's right. How would five dollars strike you?"

The farmer scowled and shook his head.

"Too much," he said, as Yates was about to offer more. "'Tain't worth it. Two-and-a-half would be about the right figure. Don'no but

that's too much. I'll think on it going home, and charge you what it's worth. I'll be ready to leave in about an hour, if that suits you. That's my team on the other side of the road. If it's gone when you come back, I'm gone, an' you'll have to get somebody else."

With this, Bartlett drew his coat-sleeve across his mouth and departed.

"That's him exactly," said the bar-keeper. "He's the most cantankerous crank in the township. And say, let me give you a pointer. If the subject of 1812 comes up,—the war, you know,—you'd better admit that we got thrashed out of our boots; that is, if you want to get along with Hiram. He hates Yankees like poison."

"And did we get thrashed in 1812?" asked Yates, who was more familiar with current topics than with the history of the past.

"Blest if I know. Hiram says we did. I told him once, that we got what we wanted from old England, and he nearly hauled me over the bar. So I give you the warning, if you want to get along with him."

"Thank you. I'll remember it. So-long."

This friendly hint from the man in the tavern offers a key to the solution of the problem of Yates's success on the New York press. He could get news when no other man could. Flippant and shallow as he undoubtedly was, he somehow got

into the inner confidences of all sorts of men, in a way that made them give him an inkling of anything that was going on for the mere love of him; and thus Yates often received valuable assistance from his acquaintances which other reporters could not get for money.

The New-Yorker found the professor sitting on a bench by the custom-house, chatting with the officer, and gazing at the rapidly-flowing broad blue river in front of them.

"I have got a man," said Yates, "who will take us out into the wilderness in about an hour's time. Suppose we explore the town. I expect nobody will run away with the tent till we come back."

"I'll look after that," said the officer; and, thanking him, the two friends strolled up the street. They were a trifle late in getting back, and when they reached the tavern, they found Bartlett just on the point of driving home. He gruffly consented to take them, if they did not keep him more than five minutes loading up. The tent and its belongings were speedily placed on the hay-rack, and then Bartlett drove up to the tavern and waited, saying nothing, although he had been in such a hurry a few moments before. Yates did not like to ask the cause of the delay: so the three sat there silently. After a while, Yates said, as mildly as he could—

"Are you waiting for anyone, Mr. Bartlett?"

"Yes," answered the driver, in a surly tone. "I'm waiting for you to go in fur that jug. I don't suppose you filled it to leave it on the counter."

"By Jove!" cried Yates, springing off, "I had forgotten all about it, which shows the extraordinary effect this country has on me already." The professor frowned, but Yates came out merrily, with the jar in his hand, and Bartlett started his team. They drove out of the village and up a slight hill, going for a mile or two along a straight and somewhat sandy road. Then they turned into the Ridge Road, as Bartlett called it, in answer to a question by the professor, and there was no need to ask why it was so termed. It was a good highway, but rather stony; the road being, in places, on the bare rock. It paid not the slightest attention to Euclid's definition of a straight line, and in this respect was rather a welcome change from the average American road. Sometimes they passed along avenues of overbranching trees, which were evidently relics of the forest that once covered all the district. The road followed the ridge, and on each side were frequently to be seen wide vistas of lower-lying country. All along the road were comfortable farmhouses; and it was evident that a prosperous community flourished along the ridge.

Bartlett spoke only once, and then to the professor, who sat next to him.

"You a Canadian?"

"Yes."

"Where's *he* from?"

"My friend is from New York," answered the innocent professor.

"Humph!" grunted Bartlett, scowling deeper than ever, after which he became silent again. The team was not going very fast, although neither the load nor the road was heavy. Bartlett was muttering a good deal to himself, and now and then brought down his whip savagely on one or the other of the horses; but the moment the unfortunate animals quickened their pace he hauled them in roughly. Nevertheless, they were going quickly enough to be overtaking a young woman who was walking on alone. Although she must have heard them coming over the rocky road, she did not turn her head, but walked along with the free and springy step of one who is not only accustomed to walking, but who likes it. Bartlett paid no attention to the girl; the professor was endeavouring to read his thin book, as well as a man might who is being jolted frequently; but Yates, as soon as he recognised that the pedestrian was young, pulled up his collar, adjusted his necktie with care, and placed his hat in a somewhat more jaunty and fetching position.

"Are you going to offer that girl a ride?" he said to Bartlett.

"No, I'm not."

"I think that is rather uncivil," he added, forgetting the warning he had had.

"You do, eh? Well, you offer her a ride. You hired the team."

"By Jove, I will," said Yates, placing his hand on the outside of the rack, and springing lightly to the ground.

"Likely thing," growled Bartlett to the professor, "that she's going to ride with the like of him."

The professor looked for a moment at Yates, politely taking off his hat to the apparently astonished young woman, but he said nothing.

"Fur two cents," continued Bartlett, gathering up the reins, "I'd whip up the horses, and let him walk the rest of the way."

"From what I know of my friend," answered the professor slowly, "I think he would not object in the slightest."

Bartlett muttered something to himself, and seemed to change his mind about galloping his horses.

Meanwhile, Yates, as has been said, took off his hat with great politeness to the fair pedestrian, and as he did so he noticed, with a thrill of admiration, that she was very handsome. Yates always had an eye for the beautiful.

"Our conveyance," he began, "is not as comfortable as it might be, yet I shall be very happy if you will accept its hospitalities."

The young woman flashed a brief glance at him from her dark eyes, and for a moment Yates feared that his language had been rather too choice for her rural understanding, but, before he could amend his phrase, she answered briefly—

"Thank you. I prefer to walk."

"Well, I don't know that I blame you. May I ask if you have come all the way from the village?"

"Yes."

"That is a long distance, and you must be very tired." There was no reply: so Yates continued, "At least, I thought it a long distance; but perhaps that was because I was riding on Bartlett's hay-rack. There is no 'downy bed of ease' about his vehicle."

As he spoke of the waggon, he looked at it, and, striding forward to its side, said in a husky whisper to the professor—

"Say, Stilly, cover up that jug with a flap of the tent."

"Cover it up yourself," briefly replied the other; "it isn't mine."

Yates reached across and, in a sort of accidental way, threw the flap of the tent over the too conspicuous jar. As an excuse for his action, he took up his walking-cane and turned towards his new acquaintance. He was flattered to see that she was loitering some distance behind the waggon, and he speedily rejoined her. The girl, looking straight ahead, now quickened her pace, and

rapidly shortened the distance between herself and the vehicle. Yates, with the quickness characteristic of him, made up his mind that this was a case of country diffidence, which was best to be met by the bringing down of his conversation to the level of his hearer's intelligence.

"Have you been marketing?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Butter and eggs, and that sort of thing?"

"We are farmers," she answered, "and we sell butter and eggs"—a pause—"and that sort of thing."

Yates laughed in his light and cheery way. As he twirled his cane, he looked at his pretty companion. She was gazing anxiously ahead towards a turn in the road. Her comely face was slightly flushed, doubtless with the exercise of walking.

"Now, in my country," continued the New-Yorker, "we idolise our women. Pretty girls don't tramp miles to market with butter and eggs."

"Aren't the girls pretty—in your country?"

Yates made a mental note that there was not as much rurality about this girl as he had thought at first. There was a piquancy about the conversation which he liked. That she shared his enjoyment was doubtful, for a slight line of resentment was noticeable on her smooth brow.

"You bet, they're pretty. I think all American girls are pretty. It seems their birthright. When

I say American I mean the whole continent, of course. I'm from the States myself—from New York." He gave an extra twirl to his cane as he said this, and bore himself with that air of conscious superiority which naturally pertains to a citizen of the metropolis. "But over in the States we think the men should do all the work, and that the women should—well—spend the money. I must do our ladies the justice to say, that they attend strictly to their share of the arrangement."

"It should be a delightful country to live in—for the women."

"They all say so. We used to have an adage to the effect that America was paradise for women, purgatory for men, and—well, an entirely different sort of place for oxen."

There was no doubt that Yates had a way of getting along with people. As he looked at his companion, he was gratified to note just the faintest suspicion of a smile hovering about her lips. Before she could answer, if she had intended to do so, there was a quick clatter of hoofs on the hard road ahead, and next instant an elegant buggy, whose slender jet-black polished spokes flashed and twinkled in the sunlight, came dashing past the waggon. On seeing the two walking together, the driver hauled up his team with a suddenness that was evidently not relished by the spirited, dappled span he drove.

"Hello, Margaret," he cried; "am I late? Have you walked in all the way?"

"You are just in good time," answered the girl, without looking towards Yates, who stood aimlessly twirling his cane. The young woman put her foot on the buggy step, and sprang lightly in beside the driver. It needed no second glance to see that he was her brother, not only on account of the family resemblance between them, but also because he allowed her to get into the buggy without offering the slightest assistance, which, indeed, was not needed, and graciously permitted her to place the duster that covered his knees over her own lap as well. The restive team trotted rapidly down the road for a few rods, until they came to a wide place in the highway, and then whirled around, seemingly within an ace of upsetting the buggy; but the young man evidently knew his business, and held them in with a firm hand. The waggon was jogging along where the road was very narrow, and Bartlett kept his team stolidly in the centre of the way.

"Hello there, Bartlett," shouted the young man in the buggy; "half the road, you know—half the road."

"Take it," cried Bartlett over his shoulder.

"Come, come, Bartlett, get out of the way, or I'll run you down."

"You just try it."

Bartlett either had no sense of humour, or his resentment against his young neighbour smothered it, since otherwise he would have recognised that a heavy waggon was in no danger of being run into by a light and expensive buggy. The young man kept his temper admirably, but he knew just where to touch the elder on the raw. His sister's hand was placed appealingly on his arm. He smiled, and took no notice of her.

"Come, now, you move out, or I'll have the law on you."

"The law!" roared Bartlett; "you just try it on."

"Should think you'd had enough of it by this time."

"Oh, don't, don't, Henry!" protested the girl, in distress.

"There ain't no law," yelled Bartlett, "that kin make a man with a load move out fur anything."

"You haven't any load, unless it's in that jug."

Yates saw with consternation that the jar had been jolted out from under its covering, but the happy consolation came to him that the two in the buggy would believe it belonged to Bartlett. He thought, however, that this dog-in-the-manger policy had gone far enough. He stepped briskly forward, and said to Bartlett—

"Better drive aside a little, and let them pass."

"You 'tend to your own business," cried the thoroughly enraged farmer.

"I will," said Yates shortly, striding to the horses' heads. He took them by the bits and, in spite of Bartlett's maledictions and pulling at the lines, he drew them to one side, so that the buggy got by.

"Thank you," cried the young man. The light and glittering carriage rapidly disappeared up the Ridge Road.

Bartlett sat there for one moment the picture of baffled rage. Then he threw the reins down on the backs of his patient horses, and descended.

"You take my horses by the head, do you, you good-fur-nuthin' Yank? You do, eh? I like your cheek. Touch my horses an' me a-holdin' the lines! Now, you hear me? Your traps comes right off here on the road. You hear me?"

"Oh, anybody within a mile can hear you."

"Kin they? Well, off comes your pesky tent."

"No, it doesn't."

"Don't it, eh? Well, then, you'll lick me fust; and that's something no Yank ever did, nor kin do."

"I'll do it with pleasure."

"Come, come," cried the professor, getting down on the road, "this has gone far enough. Keep quiet, Yates. Now, Mr. Bartlett, don't mind it; he meant no disrespect."

"Don't you interfere. You're all right, an' I ain't got nothin' agin' you. But I'm goin' to thrash this Yank within an inch of his life; see if I don't.

We met 'em in 1812, an' we fit 'em an' we licked 'em, an' we can do it agin. I'll learn ye to take my horses by the head."

"Teach," suggested Yates tantalisingly.

Before he could properly defend himself, Bartlett sprang at him and grasped him round the waist. Yates was something of a wrestler himself, but his skill was of no avail on this occasion. Bartlett's right leg became twisted around his, with a steel-like grip that speedily convinced the younger man he would have to give way or a bone would break. He gave way accordingly, and the next thing he knew he came down on his back with a thud that seemed to shake the universe.

"There, darn ye," cried the triumphant farmer; "that's 1812 and Queenston Heights for ye. How do you like 'em?"

Yates rose to his feet with some deliberation, and slowly took off his coat.

"Now, now, Yates," said the professor soothingly, "let it go at this. You're not hurt, are you?" he asked anxiously, as he noticed how white the young man was around the lips.

"Look here, Renmark; you're a sensible man. There is a time to interfere and a time not to. This is the time not to. A certain international element seems to have crept into this dispute. Now, you stand aside, like a good fellow, for I don't want to have to thrash both of you."

The professor stood aside, for he realised that when Yates called him by his last name, matters were serious.

"Now, old chuckle-head, perhaps you would like to try that again."

"I kin do it a dozen times, if ye ain't satisfied. There ain't no Yank ever raised on pumpkin-pie that can stand agin' that grape-vine twist."

"Try the grape-vine once more."

Bartlett proceeded more cautiously this time, for there was a look in the young man's face he did not quite like. He took a catch-as-catch-can attitude, and moved stealthily in a semicircle around Yates, who shifted his position constantly so as to keep facing his foe. At last Bartlett sprang forward, and the next instant found himself sitting on a piece of the rock of the country, with a thousand humming-birds buzzing in his head, while stars and the landscape around joined in a dance together. The blow was sudden, well placed, and from the shoulder.

"That," said Yates, standing over him, "is 1776 —the Revolution—when, to use your own phrase, we met ye, fit ye, and licked ye. How do you like it? Now, if my advice is of any use to you, take a broader view of history than you have done. Don't confine yourself too much to one period. Study up the war of the Revolution a bit."

Bartlett made no reply. After sitting there for a while, until the surrounding landscape assumed its normal condition, he arose leisurely, without saying a word. He picked the reins from the backs of the horses and patted the nearest animal gently. Then he mounted to his place and drove off. The professor had taken his seat beside the driver, but Yates, putting on his coat and picking up his cane, strode along in front, switching off the heads of Canada thistles with his walking-stick as he proceeded.

CHAPTER IV

BARTLETT was silent for a long time, but there was evidently something on his mind, for he communed with himself, his mutterings growing louder and louder until they broke the stillness; then he struck the horses, pulled them in, and began his soliloquy over again. At last he said abruptly to the professor—

"What's this Revolution he talked about?"

"It was the war of independence, beginning in 1776."

"Never heard of it. Did the Yanks fight us?"

"The colonies fought with England."

"What colonies?"

"The country now called the United States."

"They fit with England, eh? Which licked?"

"The colonies won their independence."

"That means they licked us. I don't believe a word of it. 'Pears to me I'd a' heard of it; fur I've lived in these parts a long time."

"It was a little before your day."

"So was 1812; but my father fit in it, an' I never heard him tell of this Revolution. He'd a'

known, I sh'd think. There's a nigger in the fence somewheres."

"Well, England was rather busy at the time with the French."

"Ah, that was it, was it? I'll bet, England never knew the Revolution was a-goin' on till it was over. Old Napoleon couldn't thrash 'em, and it don't stand to reason that the Yanks could. I thought there was some skullduggery. Why, it took the Yanks four years to lick themselves. I got a book at home all about Napoleon. He was a tough cuss."

The professor did not feel called upon to defend the character of Napoleon, and so silence once more descended upon them. Bartlett seemed a good deal disturbed by the news he had just heard of the Revolution, and he growled to himself, while the horses suffered more than usual from the whip and the hauling back that invariably followed the stroke. Yates was some distance ahead, and swinging along at a great rate, when the horses, apparently of their own accord, turned in at an open gateway and proceeded, in their usual leisurely fashion, towards a large barn, past a comfortable frame-house with a wide verandah in front.

"This is my place," said Bartlett shortly.

"I wish you had told me a few minutes ago," replied the professor, springing off, "so that I might have called to my friend."

"I'm not frettin' about him," said Bartlett, throwing the reins to a young man who came out of the house.

Renmark ran to the road and shouted loudly to the distant Yates. Yates apparently did not hear him, but something about the next house attracted the pedestrian's attention, and after standing for a moment and gazing towards the west, he looked around and saw the professor beckoning to him. When the two men met, Yates said—

"So we have arrived, have we? I say, Stilly, she lives in the next house. I saw the buggy in the yard."

"She? Who?"

"Why, that good-looking girl we passed on the road. I'm going to buy our supplies at that house, Stilly, if you have no objections. By the way, how is my old friend 1812?"

"He doesn't seem to harbour any harsh feelings. In fact, he was more troubled about the Revolution than about the blow you gave him."

"News to him, eh? Well, I'm glad I knocked something into his head."

"You certainly did it most unscientifically."

"How do you mean—unscientifically?"

"In the delivery of the blow. I never saw a more awkwardly delivered undercut."

Yates looked at his friend in astonishment. How should this calm learned man know anything about undercuts or science in blows?

"Well, you must admit I got there just the same."

"Yes, by brute force. A sledge-hammer would have done as well. But you had such an opportunity to do it neatly and deftly, without any display of surplus energy, that I regretted to see such an opening thrown away."

"Heavens and earth, Stilly, this is the professor in a new light. What do you teach in Toronto University, anyhow? The noble art of self-defence?"

"Not exactly; but if you intend to go through Canada in this belligerent manner, I think it would be worth your while to take a few hints from me."

"With striking examples, I suppose. By Jove, I will, Stilly."

As the two came to the house, they found Bartlett sitting in a wooden rocking-chair on the verandah, looking grimly down the road.

"What an old tyrant that man must be in his home!" said Yates. There was no time for the professor to reply before they came within earshot.

"The old woman's setting out supper," said the farmer gruffly; that piece of information being apparently as near as he could get towards inviting them to share his hospitality. Yates didn't know whether it was meant for an invitation or not, but he answered shortly—

"Thanks, we won't stay."

"Speak fur yourself, please," snarled Bartlett.

"Of course I go with my friend," said Renmark; "but we are obliged for the invitation."

"Please yourselves."

"What's that?" cried a cheery voice from the inside of the house, as a stout, rosy, and very good-natured looking woman appeared at the front door. "Won't stay? *Who* won't stay? I'd like to see anybody leave my house hungry, when there's a meal on the table. And, young men, if you can get a better meal anywhere on the Ridge than what I'll give you, why, you're welcome to go there next time, but this meal you'll have here, inside of ten minutes. Hiram, that's your fault. You always invite a person to dinner as if you wanted to wrastle with him."

Hiram gave a guilty start, and looked with something of mute appeal at the two men, but said nothing.

"Never mind him," continued Mrs. Bartlett. "You're at my house; and, whatever my neighbours may say agin' me, I never heard anybody complain of the lack of good victuals while I was able to do the cooking. Come right in and wash yourselves, for the road between here and the fort is dusty enough, even if Hiram never was taken up for fast driving. Besides, a wash is refreshing after a hot day."

There was no denying the cordiality of this

invitation, and Yates, whose natural gallantry was at once aroused, responded with the readiness of a courtier. Mrs. Bartlett led the way into the house; but as Yates passed the farmer, the latter cleared his throat with an effort, and, throwing his thumb over his shoulder in the direction his wife had taken, said in a husky whisper—

"No call to—to mention the Revolution, you know."

"Certainly not," answered Yates, with a wink that took in the situation. "Shall we sample the jug before or after supper?"

"After, if it's all the same to you"; adding, "out in the barn."

Yates nodded, and followed his friend into the house.

The young men were shown into a bedroom of more than ordinary size, on the upper floor. Everything about the house was of the most dainty and scrupulous cleanliness, and an air of cheerful comfort pervaded the place. Mrs. Bartlett was evidently a housekeeper to be proud of. Two large pitchers of cool soft water awaited them, and the wash, as had been predicted, was most refreshing.

"I say," cried Yates, "it's rather cheeky to accept a man's hospitality after knocking him down."

"It would be for most people, but I think you under-estimate your cheek, as you call it."

"Bravo, Stilly! You're blossoming out. That's rapartee, that is. With the accent on the rap, too. Never you mind; I think old 1812 and I will get on all right after this. It doesn't seem to bother him any, so I don't see why it should worry me. Nice motherly old lady, isn't she?"

"Who? 1812?"

"No; Mrs. 1812. I'm sorry I complimented you on your repartee. You'll get conceited. Remember that what in the newspaper man is clever, in a grave professor is rank flippancy. Let's go down."

The table was covered with a cloth as white and spotless as good linen can well be. The bread was genuine home-made, a term so often misused in the cities. It was brown as to crust, and flaky and light as to interior. The butter, cool from the rock cellar, was of a refreshing yellow hue. The sight of the well-loaded table was most welcome to the eyes of hungry travellers. There was, as Yates afterwards remarked, "abundance and plenty of it."

"Come, father," cried Mrs. Bartlett, as the young men appeared; they heard the rocking-chair creak on the verandah in prompt answer to the summons.

"This is my son, gentlemen," said Mrs. Bartlett, indicating the young man who stood in a non-committal attitude near a corner of the room.

The professor recognised him as the person who had taken charge of the horses when his father came home. There was evidently something of his father's demeanour about the young man, who awkwardly and silently responded to the recognition of the strangers.

"And this is my daughter," continued the good woman. "Now, what might your names be?"

"My name is Yates, and this is my friend Professor Renmark, of T'ronto," pronouncing the name of the fair city in two syllables, as is, alas! too often done. The professor bowed, and Yates cordially extended his hand to the young woman. "How do you do, Miss Bartlett?" he said. "I am happy to meet you."

The girl smiled very prettily, and said she hoped they had a pleasant trip out from Fort Erie.

"Oh, we had," said Yates, looking for a moment at his host, whose eyes were fixed on the table-cloth, and who appeared to be quite content to let his wife run the show. "The road's a little rocky in places, but it's very pleasant."

"Now you sit down here, and you here," said Mrs. Bartlett; "and I do hope you have brought good appetites with you."

The strangers took their places, and Yates had a chance to look at the younger member of the family, which opportunity he did not let slip. It was hard to believe that she was the daughter of

so crusty a man as Hiram Bartlett. Her cheeks were rosy, with dimples in them that constantly came and went, in her incessant efforts to keep from laughing. Her hair, which hung about her plump shoulders, was a lovely golden brown. Although her dress was of the cheapest material, it was neatly cut and fitted; and her dainty white apron added that touch of wholesome cleanliness which was so noticeable everywhere in the house. A bit of blue ribbon at her white throat, and a pretty spring flower just below it, completed a charming picture, which a more critical and less susceptible man than Yates might have contemplated with pleasure.

Miss Bartlett sat smilingly at one end of the table, and her father grimly at the other. The mother sat at the side, apparently looking on that position as one of vantage for commanding the whole field, and keeping her husband and her daughter both under her eye. The teapot and cups were set before the young woman. She did not pour out the tea at once, but seemed to be waiting instructions from her mother. That good lady was gazing with some sternness at her husband, he vainly endeavouring to look at the ceiling or anywhere but at her. He drew his open hand nervously down his face, which was of unusual gravity even for him. Finally he cast an appealing glance at his wife, who sat with her

hands folded on her lap, but her eyes were unrelenting. After a moment's hopeless irresolution, Bartlett bent his head over his plate and murmured—

"For what we are about to receive, oh, make us truly thankful. Amen."

Mrs. Bartlett echoed the last word, having also bowed her head when she saw surrender in the troubled eyes of her husband.

Now, it happened that Yates, who had seen nothing of this silent struggle of the eyes, being exceedingly hungry, was making every preparation for the energetic beginning of the meal. He had spent most of his life in hotels and New York boarding-houses, so that if he ever knew the adage "Grace before meat" he had forgotten it. In the midst of his preparations came the devout words, and they came upon him as a stupefying surprise. Although naturally a resourceful man, he was not quick enough this time to cover his confusion. Miss Bartlett's golden head was bowed, but out of the corner of her eye she saw Yates's look of amazed bewilderment and his sudden halt of surprise. When all heads were raised, the young girl's still remained where it was, while her plump shoulders quivered. Then she covered her face with her apron, and the silvery ripple of a laugh came like a smothered musical chime trickling through her fingers.

"Why, *Kitty!*" cried her mother in astonishment, "whatever is the matter with you?"

The girl could no longer restrain her mirth. "You'll have to pour out the tea, mother," she exclaimed, as she fled from the room.

"For the land's sake!" cried the astonished mother, rising to take her frivolous daughter's place, "what ails the child? I don't see what there is to laugh at."

Hiram scowled down the table, and was evidently also of the opinion that there was no occasion for mirth. The professor was equally in the dark.

"I am afraid, Mrs. Bartlett," said Yates, "that I am the innocent cause of Miss Kitty's mirth. You see, madam,—it's a pathetic thing to say, but really I have had no home life. Although I attend church regularly, of course," he added, with jaunty mendacity, "I must confess that I haven't heard grace at meals for years and years, and — well, I wasn't just prepared for it. I have no doubt I made an exhibition of myself, which your daughter was quick to see."

"It wasn't very polite," said Mrs. Bartlett, with some asperity.

"I know that," pleaded Yates, with contrition, "but I assure you it was unintentional on my part."

"Bless the man!" cried his hostess. "I don't mean you. I mean Kitty. But that girl never

could keep her face straight. She always favoured me more than her father."

This statement was not difficult to believe, for Hiram, at that moment, looked as if he had never smiled in his life. He sat silent throughout the meal, but Mrs. Bartlett talked quite enough for two.

"Well, for my part," she said, "I don't know what farming's coming to. Henry Howard and Margaret drove past here this afternoon, as proud as Punch in their new covered buggy. Things is very different from what they was when I was a girl. Then a farmer's daughter had to work. Now Margaret's took her diploma at the ladies' college, and Arthur he's begun at the university, and Henry's sporting round in a new buggy. They have a piano there, with the organ moved out into the back room."

"The whole Howard lot's a stuck-up set," muttered the farmer.

But Mrs. Bartlett wouldn't have that. Any detraction that was necessary she felt competent to supply, without help from the nominal head of the house.

"No, I don't go so far as to say that. Neither would you, Hiram, if you hadn't lost your lawsuit about the line fence; and served you right, too, for it wouldn't have been begun if I had been at home at the time. Not but what Margaret's a

good housekeeper, for she wouldn't be her mother's daughter if she wasn't that; but it does seem to me a queer way to raise farmers' children, and I only hope they can keep it up. There were no pianos nor French and German in *my* young days."

"You ought to hear her play! My lands!" cried young Bartlett, who spoke for the first time. His admiration for her accomplishment evidently went beyond his powers of expression.

Bartlett himself did not relish the turn the conversation had taken, and he looked somewhat uneasily at the two strangers. The professor's countenance was open and frank, and he was listening with respectful interest to Mrs. Bartlett's talk. Yates bent over his plate with flushed face, and confined himself strictly to the business in hand.

"I am glad," said the professor innocently to Yates, "that you made the young lady's acquaintance. I must ask you for an introduction."

For once in his life Yates had nothing to say, but he looked at his friend with an expression that was not kindly. The latter, in answer to Mrs. Bartlett's inquiries, told how they had passed Miss Howard on the road, and how Yates, with his usual kindness of heart, had offered the young woman the hospitalities of the hay-rack. Two persons at the table were much relieved when the talk turned to the tent. It was young Hiram who

brought about this boon. He was interested in the tent, and he wanted to know. Two things seemed to bother the boy. First, he was anxious to learn what diabolical cause had been at work to induce two apparently sane men to give up the comforts of home and live in this exposed manner, if they were not compelled to do so. Second, he desired to find out why people who had the privilege of living in large cities, came of their own accord into the uninteresting country anyhow. Even when explanations were offered, the problem seemed still beyond him.

After the meal they all adjourned to the verandah, where the air was cool and the view extensive. Mrs. Bartlett would not hear of the young men pitching the tent that night.

"Goodness knows, you will have enough of it, with the rain and the mosquitoes. We have plenty of room here, and you will have one comfortable night on the Ridge, at any rate. Then in the morning you can find a place in the woods to suit you, and my boy will take an axe and cut stakes for you, and help to put up your precious tent. Only remember, that when it rains you are to come to the house, or you will catch your deaths with cold and rheumatism. It will be very nice till the novelty wears off; then you are quite welcome to the front rooms upstairs, and Hiram can take the tent back to Erie the first time he goes to town."

Mrs. Bartlett had a way of taking things for granted. It never seemed to occur to her that any of her rulings might be questioned. Hiram sat gazing silently at the road, as if all this was no affair of his.

Yates had refused a chair, and sat on the edge of the verandah, with his back against one of the pillars, in such a position that he might, without turning his head, look through the open doorway into the room where Miss Bartlett was busily but silently clearing away the tea-things. The young man caught fleeting glimpses of her as she moved airily about her work. He drew a cigar from his case, cut off the end with his knife, and lit a match on the sole of his boot, doing this with an easy automatic familiarity that required no attention on his part; all of which aroused the respectful envy of young Hiram, who sat on a wooden chair, leaning forward, eagerly watching the man from New York.

"Have a cigar?" said Yates, offering the case to young Hiram.

"No, no; thank you," gasped the boy, aghast at the reckless audacity of the proposal.

"What's that?" cried Mrs. Bartlett. Although she was talking volubly to the professor, her maternal vigilance never even nodded, much less slept. "A cigar? Not likely! I'll say this for my husband and my boy, that, whatever else they may

have done, they have never smoked nor touched a drop of liquor since I've known them, and—please God—they never will."

"Oh, I guess it wouldn't hurt them," said Yates, with a lack of tact that was not habitual. He fell several degrees in the estimation of his hostess.

"Hurt 'em?" cried Mrs. Bartlett indignantly. "I guess it won't get a chance to." She turned to the professor, who was a good listener—respectful and deferential, with little to say for himself. She rocked gently to and fro as she talked.

Her husband sat unbendingly silent, in a sphinx-like attitude that gave no outward indication of his mental uneasiness. He was thinking gloomily that it would be just his luck to meet Mrs. Bartlett unexpectedly in the streets of Fort Erie, on one of those rare occasions when he was enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. He had the most pessimistic forebodings of what the future might have in store for him. Sometimes, when neighbours or customers "treated" him in the village, and he felt he had taken all the whisky that cloves would conceal, he took a five-cent cigar instead of a drink. He did not particularly like the smoking of it, but there was a certain devil-may-care recklessness in going down the street with a lighted cigar in his teeth, which had all the more fascination for him because of its manifest danger. He felt at these times that he was going the pace, and that it

is well our women do not know of all the wickedness there is in this world. He did not fear that any neighbour might tell his wife, for there were depths to which no person could convince Mrs. Bartlett he would descend. But he thought with horror of some combination of circumstances that might bring his wife to town unknown to him on a day when he indulged. He pictured, with a shudder, meeting her unexpectedly on the uncertain plank side-walk of Fort Erie, he smoking a cigar. When this nightmare presented itself to him, he resolved never to touch a cigar again; but he well knew that the best resolutions fade away if a man is excited with two or three glasses of liquor.

When Mrs. Bartlett resumed conversation with the professor, Yates looked up at young Hiram and winked. The boy flushed with pleasure under the comprehensiveness of that wink. It included him in the attractive halo of crime that enveloped the fascinating personality of the man from New York. It seemed to say,—

"That's all right, but we are men of the world. *We* know."

Young Hiram's devotion to the Goddess Nicotine had never reached the altitude of a cigar. He had surreptitiously smoked a pipe in a secluded corner behind the barn in days when his father was away. He feared both his father and his mother, and so was in an even more embarrassing situation than

old Hiram himself. He had worked gradually up to tobacco by smoking cigarettes of cane made from abandoned hoop-skirts. Crinoline was fashionable, even in the country, in those days, and ribs of cane were used before the metallic distenders of dresses came in. One hoop-skirt, whose usefulness as an article of adornment was gone, would furnish delight and smoking material for a company of boys for a month. The cane smoke made the tongue rather raw, but the wickedness was undeniable. Yates's wink seemed to recognise young Hiram as a comrade worthy to offer incense at the shrine, and the boy was a firm friend of Yates from the moment the eyelid of the latter drooped.

The tea-things having been cleared away, Yates got no more glimpses of the girl through the open door. He rose from his lowly seat and strolled towards the gate, with his hands in his pockets. He remembered that he had forgotten something, and cudgelled his brains to make out what it was. He gazed down the road at the house of the Howards, which naturally brought to his recollection his meeting with the young girl on the road. There was a pang of discomfiture in this thought, when he remembered the accomplishments attributed to her by Mrs. Bartlett. He recalled his condescending tone to her, and recollected his anxiety about the jar. The jar! That was what he had forgotten. He flashed a glance at old

Hiram, and noted that the farmer was looking at him with something like reproach in his eyes. Yates moved his head almost imperceptibly towards the barn, and the farmer's eyes dropped to the floor of the verandah. The young man nonchalantly strolled past the end of the house.

"I guess I'll go to look after the horses," said the farmer, rising.

"The horses are all right, father. I saw to them," put in his son, but the old man frowned him down, and slouched around the corner of the house. Mrs. Bartlett was too busy talking to the professor to notice. So good a listener did not fall to her lot every day.

"Here's looking at you," said Yates, strolling into the barn, taking a telescopic metal cup from his pocket, and clinking it into receptive shape by a jerk of the hand. He offered the now elongated cup to Hiram, who declined any such modern improvement.

"Help yourself in that thing. The jug's good enough for me."

"Three fingers" of the liquid gurgled out into the patented vessel, and the farmer took the jar, after a furtive look over his shoulder.

"Well, here's luck." The newspaper-man tossed off the potion with the facility of long experience, shutting up the dish with his thumb and finger, as if it were a metallic opera-hat.

The farmer drank silently from the jar itself. Then he smote in the cork with his open palm.

"Better bury it in the wheat-bin," he said morosely. "The boy might find it if you put it among the oats—feedin' the horses, ye know."

"Mighty good place," assented Yates, as the golden grain flowed in a wave over the submerged jar. "I say, old man, you know the spot: you've been here before."

Bartlett's lowering countenance indicated resentment at the imputation, but he neither affirmed nor denied. Yates strolled out of the barn, while the farmer went through a small doorway that led to the stable. A moment later he heard Hiram calling loudly to his son to bring the pails and water the horses.

"Evidently preparing an alibi," said Yates, smiling to himself, as he sauntered towards the gate.

CHAPTER V

"WHAT'S up? what's up?" cried Yates drowsily, next morning, as a prolonged hammering at his door awakened him.

"Well, *you're* not, anyhow"; he recognised the voice of young Hiram. "I say; breakfast's ready. The professor has been up an hour."

"All right; I'll be down shortly," said Yates yawning, adding to himself, "hang the professor!' The sun was streaming in through the east window, but Yates never before remembered seeing it such a short distance above the horizon in the morning. He pulled his watch from the pocket of his vest, hanging on the bed-post. It was not yet seven o'clock. He placed it to his ear, thinking it had stopped, but found himself mistaken.

"What an unearthly hour," he said, unable to check the yawns. Yates's years on a morning newspaper had made seven o'clock something like midnight to him. He had been unable to sleep until after two o'clock, his usual time of turning in, and now this rude awakening seemed thoughtless

cruelty. However, he dressed, and yawned himself downstairs.

They were all seated at breakfast when Yates entered the apartment, which was at once dining-room and parlour.

"Waiting for you," said young Hiram humorously, that being one of a set of jokes which suited various occasions. Yates took his place near Miss Kitty, who looked as fresh and radiant as a spirit of the morning.

"I hope I haven't kept you waiting long," he said.

"No fear," cried Mrs. Bartlett. "If breakfast's a minute later than seven o'clock, we soon hear of it from the men-folks. They get precious hungry by that time."

"By that time?" echoed Yates. "Then do they get up before seven?"

"Laws! what a farmer you would make, Mr. Yates!" exclaimed Mrs. Bartlett, laughing. "Why, everything's done about the house and barn; horses fed, cows milked—everything. There never was a better motto made than the one you learnt when you were a boy, and like as not have forgotten all about:

> Early to bed and early to rise
> Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

I'm sorry you don't believe in it, Mr. Yates."

"Oh, that's all right," said Yates, with some

loftiness; "but I'd like to see a man get out a morning paper on such a basis. I'm healthy enough, quite as wealthy as the professor here, and everyone will admit that I'm wiser than he is; yet I never go to bed until after two o'clock, and rarely wake before noon."

Kitty laughed at this, and young Hiram looked admiringly at the New-Yorker, wishing he was as clever.

"For the land's sake!" cried Mrs. Bartlett, with true feminine profanity. "What do you do up so late as that?"

"Writing, writing," said Yates airily; "articles that make dynasties tremble next morning, and which call forth apologies or libel suits afterwards, as the case may be."

Young Hiram had no patience with one's profession as a topic of conversation. The tent and its future position was the burning question with him. He mumbled something about Yates having slept late in order to avoid the hearing of the words of thankfulness at the beginning of the meal. What his parents caught of this remark should have shown them how evil communications corrupt good manners; for, big as he was, the boy had never before ventured even to hint at ridicule on such a subject. He was darkly frowned upon by his silent father, and sharply reprimanded by his voluble mother. Kitty apparently thought it rather

funny, and would like to have laughed. As it was, she contented herself with a sly glance at Yates, who, incredible as it may seem, actually blushed at young Hiram's allusion to the confusing incident of the day before.

The professor, who was a kind-hearted man, drew a herring across the scent.

"Mr. Bartlett has been good enough," said the professor, changing the subject, "to say we may camp in the woods at the back of the farm. I have been out there this morning, and it certainly is a lovely spot."

"We're awfully obliged, Mr. Bartlett," said Yates. "Of course, Renmark went out there merely to show the difference between the ant and the butterfly. You'll find out what a humbug he is by and by, Mrs. Bartlett. He looks honest; but you wait."

"I know just the spot for the tent," cried young Hiram—"down in the hollow by the creek. Then you won't need to haul water."

"Yes, and catch their deaths of fever and ague," said Mrs. Bartlett. Malaria had not then been invented. "Take my advice, and put your tent—if you *will* put it up at all—on the highest ground you can find. Hauling water won't hurt you."

'I agree with you, Mrs. Bartlett. It shall be so. My friend uses no water—you ought to have seen his bill at the Buffalo hotel. I have it somewhere,

and am going to pin it up on the outside of the tent as a warning to the youth of this neighbourhood—and what water I need, I can easily carry up from the creek."

The professor did not defend himself, and Mrs. Bartlett evidently took a large discount from all that Yates said. She was a shrewd woman.

After breakfast, the men went out to the barn. The horses were hitched to the waggon, which still contained the tent and fittings. Young Hiram threw an axe and a spade among the canvas folds, mounted to his place, and drove up the lane leading to the forest, followed by Yates and Renmark on foot, leaving the farmer in his barn-yard with a cheery good-bye, which he did not see fit to return.

First, a field of wheat; next, an expanse of waving hay that soon would be ready for the scythe; then a pasture field, in which some young horses galloped to the fence, gazing for a moment at the harnessed horses, whinnying sympathetically, off the next with flying heels wildly flung in the air rejoicing in their own contrast of liberty, standing at the farther corner and snorting defiance to all the world; last, the cool shade of the woods into which the lane ran, losing its identity as a waggon-road in diverging cow-paths. Young Hiram knew the locality well, and drove direct to an ideal place for camping. Yates was enchanted.

He included all that section of the country in a sweeping wave of his hand, and burst forth—

> " ' This is the spot, the centre of the grove:
> There stands the oak the monarch of the wood.
> In such a place as this, at such an hour,
> We'll raise a tent to ward off sun and shower.'

Shakespeare improved."

"I think you are mistaken," said Renmark.

"Not a bit of it. Couldn't be a better camping ground."

"Yes; I know that. I picked it out two hours ago. But you were wrong in your quotation. It is not by Shakespeare and yourself, as you seem to think."

"Isn't it? Some other fellow, eh? Well, if Shake. is satisfied, I am. Do you know, Renny, I calculate that, line for line, I've written about ten times as much as Shakespeare. Do the literati recognise that fact? Not a bit of it. This is an ungrateful world, Stilly."

"It is, Dick. Now, what are you going to do towards putting up the tent?"

"Everything, my boy, everything. I know more about putting up tents than you do about science, or whatever you teach. Now Hiram, my boy, you cut me some stakes about two feet long—stout ones. Here, professor, throw off that coat and *négligé* manner, and grasp this spade. I want some trenches dug."

Yates certainly made good his words. He understood the putting up of tents, his experience in the army being not yet remote. Young Hiram gazed with growing admiration at Yates's deftness and evident knowledge of what he was about, while his contempt for the professor's futile struggle with a spade entangled in tree roots was hardly repressed.

"Better give me that spade," he said at length; but there was an element of stubbornness in Renmark's character. He struggled on.

At last the work was completed, stakes driven, ropes tightened, trenches dug.

Yates danced, and gave the war-hoop of the country.

> "Thus the canvas tent has risen,
> All the slanting stakes are driven,
> Stakes of oak and stakes of beechwood:
> Mops his brow, the tired professor;
> Grins with satisfaction, Hiram;
> Dances wildly, the reporter—
> Calls aloud for gin and water.

Longfellow, old man, Longfellow. Bet you a dollar on it!" And the frivolous Yates poked the professor in the ribs.

"Richard," said the latter, "I can stand only a certain amount of this sort of thing. I don't wish to call any man a fool, but you act remarkably like one."

"Don't be mealy-mouthed, Renny; call a spade a spade. By George! young Hiram has gone off

and forgotten his — and the axe too. Perhaps they're left for us. He's a good fellow, is young Hiram. A fool? Of course I'm a fool. That's what I came for, and that's what I'm going to be for the next two weeks. 'A fool—a fool, I met a fool i' the forest,' just the spot for him. Who could be wise here, after years of brick and mortar?

"Where are your eyes, Renny," he cried, "that you don't grow wild when you look around you? See the dappled sunlight filtering through the leaves; listen to the murmur of the wind in the branches; hear the trickle of the brook down there; notice the smooth bark of the beech and the rugged covering of the oak; smell the wholesome woodland scents. Renmark, you have no soul, or you could not be so unmoved. It is like paradise. It is— Say, Renny, by Jove, I've forgotten that jug at the barn!"

"It will be left there."

"Will it? Oh, well, if you say so."

"I do say so. I looked around for it this morning to smash it, but couldn't find it."

"Why didn't you ask old Bartlett?"

"I did; but he didn't know where it was."

Yates threw himself down on the moss and laughed, flinging his arms and legs about with the joy of living.

"Say, Culture, have you got any old disreputable

clothes with you? Well, then, go into the tent and put them on, then come out and lie on your back and look up at the leaves. You're a good fellow, Renny, but decent clothes spoil you. You won't know yourself when you get ancient duds on your back. Old clothes mean freedom, liberty, all that our ancestors fought for. When you come out, we'll settle who's to cook and who to wash dishes. I've settled it already in my own mind, but I am not so selfish as to refuse to discuss the matter with you."

When the professor came out of the tent, Yates roared. Renmark himself smiled; he knew the effect would appeal to Yates.

"By Jove, old man, I ought to have included a mirror in the outfit. The look of learned respectability, set off with the garments of a disreputable tramp, makes a combination that is simply killing. Well, you can't spoil *that* suit, anyhow. Now sprawl."

"I'm very comfortable standing up, thank you."

"Get down on your back. You hear me?"

"Put me there."

"You mean it?" asked Yates, sitting up.

"Certainly."

"Say, Renny, beware. I don't want to hurt you."

"I'll forgive you for once."

"On your head be it."

"On my back, you mean."

"That's not bad, Renny," cried Yates, springing to his feet. "Now, it will hurt. You have fair warning. I have spoken."

The young men took sparring attitudes. Yates tried to do it gently at first, but, finding he could not touch his opponent, struck out more earnestly, again giving a friendly warning. This went on ineffectually for some time, when the professor, with a quick movement, swung around his foot with the airy grace of a dancing-master, and caught Yates just behind the knee, at the same time giving him a slight tap on the breast. Yates was instantly on his back.

"Oh, I say, Renny, that wasn't fair. That was a kick."

"No, it wasn't. It is merely a little French touch. I learned it in Paris. They *do* kick there, you know; and it is good to know how to use your feet as well as your fists if you are set on by three, as I was one night in the Latin Quarter."

Yates sat up.

"Look here, Renmark, when were you in Paris?"

"Several times."

Yates gazed at him for a few moments, then said—

"Renny, you improve on acquaintance. I never saw a Bool-var in my life. You must teach me that little kick."

"With pleasure," said Renmark, sitting down, while the other sprawled at full length. "Teaching is my business, and I shall be glad to exercise any talents I may have in that line. In endeavouring to instruct a New York man, the first step is to convince him that he doesn't know everything. That is the difficult point. Afterwards, everything is easy."

"Mr. Stillson Renmark, you are pleased to be severe. Know that you are forgiven. This delicious sylvan retreat does not lend itself to acrimonious dispute, or, in plain English, quarrelling. Let dogs delight, if they want to; I refuse to be goaded by your querulous nature into giving anything but the soft answer. Now to business. Nothing is so conducive to friendship, when two people are camping out, as a definition of the duties of each at the beginning. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly. What do you propose?"

"I propose that you do the cooking and I wash the dishes. We will forage for food alternate days."

"Very well. I agree to that."

Richard Yates sat suddenly upright, looking at his friend with reproach in his eyes. "See here, Renmark. Are you resolved to force on an international complication the very first day? That's no fair show to give a man."

"What isn't?"

"Why, agreeing with him. There are depths of meanness in your character, Renny, that I never suspected. You know that people who camp out always object to the part assigned them by their fellow-campers. I counted on that. I'll do anything but wash dishes."

"Then, why didn't you say so?"

"Because any sane man would have said 'no' when I suggested cooking, merely *because* I suggested it. There is no diplomacy about you, Renmark. A man doesn't know where to find you, when you act like that. When you refused to do the cooking, I would have said, 'Very well, then, I'll do it,' and everything would have been lovely; but now"—

Yates lay down again in disgust. There are moments in life when language fails a man.

"Then it's settled that you do the cooking and I wash the dishes?" said the professor.

"Settled? Oh yes, if you say so; but all the pleasure of getting one's own way by the use of one's brains is gone. I hate to be agreed with in that objectionably civil manner."

"Well, that point being arranged, who begins the foraging, you or I?"

"Both, Herr Professor, both. I propose to go to the house of the Howards, and I need an excuse for the first visit; therefore I shall forage to a limited

extent. I go ostensibly for bread. As I may not get any, you perhaps should bring some from whatever farmhouse you choose as the scene of your operations. Bread is always handy in the camp, fresh or stale. When in doubt, buy more bread. You can never go wrong, and the bread won't."

"What else should I get? Milk, I suppose?"

"Certainly, eggs, butter,—anything. Mrs. Bartlett will give you hints on what to get that will be more valuable than mine."

"Have you all the cooking utensils you need?"

"I think so. The villain from whom I hired the outfit said it was complete. Doubtless he lied; but we'll manage, I think."

"Very well. If you wait until I change my clothes, I'll go with you as far as the road."

"My dear fellow, be advised, and don't change. You'll get everything 20 per cent. cheaper in that rig-out. Besides, you are so much more picturesque. Your costume may save us from starvation if we run short of cash. You can get enough for both of us as a professional tramp. Oh, well, if you insist, I'll wait. Good advice is thrown away on a man like you."

CHAPTER VI

MARGARET HOWARD stood at the kitchen table kneading dough. The room was called the kitchen, which it was not, except in winter. The stove was moved out in spring to a lean-to, easily reached through the open door leading to the kitchen verandah.

When the stove went out or came in, it marked the approach or the departure of summer. It was the heavy pendulum whose swing this way or that indicated the two great changes of the year. No job about the farm was so much disliked by the farmer and his boys as the semi-annual removal of the stove. Soot came down, stove pipes gratingly grudged to go together again ; the stove was heavy and cumbersome, and many a pain in a rural back dated from the journey of the stove from outhouse to kitchen.

The kitchen itself was a one-storey building, which projected back from the two-storey farm-house, giving the whole a T-shape. There was a verandah on each side of the kitchen, as well as one along the front of the house itself.

Margaret's sleeves were turned back nearly to her elbows, showing a pair of white and shapely arms. Now and then she deftly dusted the kneading board with flour to prevent the dough sticking, and as she pressed her open palms into the smooth, white, spongy mass, the table groaned protestingly. She cut the roll with a knife into lumps that were patted into shape, and placed side by side, like hillocks of snow, in the sheet-iron pan.

At this moment there was a rap at the open kitchen door, and Margaret turned round startled, for visitors were rare at that hour of the day; besides, neighbours seldom made such a concession to formality as to knock. The young girl flushed as she recognised the man who had spoken to her the day before. He stood smiling in the doorway, with his hat in his hand. She uttered no word of greeting or welcome, but stood looking at him, with her hand on the floury table.

"Good-morning, Miss Howard," said Yates blithely; "may I come in? I have been knocking for some time fruitlessly at the front door, so I took the liberty of coming around."

"I did not hear you knock," answered Margaret. She neglected to invite him in, but he took the permission for granted and entered, seating himself as one who had come to stay.

"You must excuse me for going on with my work," she added; "bread at this stage will not wait."

"Certainly, certainly. Please do not let me interrupt you. I have made my own bread for years, but not in that way. I am glad that you are making bread, for I have come to see if I can buy some."

"Really? Perhaps I can sell you some butter and eggs as well."

Yates laughed in that joyous, free-hearted manner of his, which had much to do with his getting on in the world. It was difficult to remain long angry with so buoyant a nature.

"Ah, Miss Howard, I see you haven't forgiven me for that remark. You surely could not have thought I meant it. I really intended it for a joke, but I am willing to admit, now that I look back on it, that the joke was rather poor; but then, most of my jokes are rather shopworn."

"I am afraid I lack a sense of humour."

"All women do," said Yates, with easy confidence. "At least, all I've ever met."

Yates was sitting in a wooden chair, which he now placed at the end of the table, tilting it back until his shoulders rested against the wall. His feet were upon the rung, and he waved his hat back and forth, fanning himself, for it was warm. In this position he could look up at the face of the pretty girl before him, whose smooth brow was touched with just the slightest indication of a faint frown. She did not even glance at the self-confident young man,

but kept her eyes fixed resolutely on her work. In the silence, the table creaked as Margaret kneaded the dough. Yates felt an unaccustomed sensation of embarrassment creeping over him, and realised that he would have to re-erect the conversation on a new basis. It was manifestly absurd that a resourceful New-Yorker, who had conversed unabashed with presidents, senators, generals, and other great people of a great nation, should be put out of countenance by the unaccountable coldness of a country girl in the wilds of Canada.

"I have not had an opportunity of properly introducing myself," he said at last, when the creaking of the table, slight as it was, became insupportable. "My name is Richard Yates, and I come from New York. I am camping out in this neighbourhood to relieve, as it were, a mental strain—the result of years of literary work."

Yates knew from long experience that the quickest and surest road to a woman's confidence was through her sympathy. "Mental strain" struck him as a good phrase, indicating midnight oil and the hollow eye of the devoted student.

"Is your work mental, then?" asked Margaret incredulously, flashing, for the first time, a dark-eyed look at him.

"Yes," Yates laughed uneasily. He had manifestly missed fire. "I notice by your tone that you evidently think my equipment meagre. You should

not judge by appearances, Miss Howard. Most of us are better than we seem, pessimists to the contrary notwithstanding. Well, as I was saying, the camping company consists of two partners. We are so different in every respect that we are the best of friends. My partner is Mr. Stillson Renmark, professor of something or other in University College, Toronto."

For the first time Margaret exhibited some interest in the conversation.

"Professor Renmark? I have heard of him."

"Dear me! I had no idea the fame of the professor had penetrated beyond the precincts of the university—if a university has precincts. He told me it had all the modern improvements, but I suspected at the time that was merely Renny's brag."

The frown on the girl's brow deepened, and Yates was quick to see that he had lost ground again, if indeed he had ever gained any, which he began to doubt. She evidently did not relish his glib talk about the university. He was just about to say something deferentially about that institution, for he was not a man who would speak disrespectfully of the equator if he thought he might curry favour with his auditor by doing otherwise, when it occurred to him that Miss Howard's interest was centred in the man and not in the university.

"In this world, Miss Howard," he continued, "true merit rarely finds its reward; at least, the reward shows some reluctance in making itself visible in time for a man to enjoy it. Professor Renmark is a man so worthy that I was rather astonished to learn that you knew of him. I am glad for his sake that it is so, for no man more thoroughly deserves fame than he."

"I know nothing of him," said Margaret, "except what my brother has written. My brother is a student at the university."

"Is he really? And what is he going in for?"

"A good education."

Yates laughed.

"Well, that is an all-round handy thing for a person to have about him. I often wish I had had a university training. Still, it is not valued in an American newspaper office as much as might be. Yet," he added, in a tone that showed he did not desire to be unfair to a man of education, "I have known some university men who became passibly good reporters in time."

The girl made no answer, but attended strictly to the work in hand. She had the rare gift of silence, and these intervals of quiet abashed Yates, whose most frequent boast was that he could outtalk any man on earth. Opposition, or even abuse, merely served as a spur to his volubility, but taciturnity disconcerted him.

"Well," he cried at length, with something like desperation, "let us abandon this animated discussion on the subject of education, and take up the more practical topic of bread. Would you believe, Miss Howard, that I am an expert in bread-making?"

"I think you said already that you made your bread."

"Ah, yes, but I meant then that I made it by the sweat of my good lead-pencil. Still, I have made bread in my time, and I believe that some of those who subsisted upon it are alive to-day. The endurance of the human frame is something marvellous, when you come to think of it. I did the baking in a lumber camp one winter. Used to dump the contents of a sack of flour into a trough made out of a log, pour in a pail or two of melted snow, and mix with a hoe after the manner of a bricklayer's assistant making mortar. There was nothing small or mean about my bread-making. I was in the wholesale trade."

"I pity the unfortunate lumbermen."

"Your sympathy is entirely misplaced, Miss Howard. You ought to pity me for having to pander to such appetites as those men brought in from the woods with them. They never complained of the quality of the bread, although there was occasionally some grumbling about the quantity. I have fed sheaves to a threshing-machine and

logs to a saw-mill, but their voracity was nothing to that of a big lumberman just in from felling trees. Enough, and plenty of it, is what he wants. No tabbledote for him. He wants it all at once, and he wants it right away. If there is any washing necessary, he is content to do it after the meal. I know nothing, except a morning paper, that has such an appetite for miscellaneous stuff as the man of the woods."

The girl made no remark, but Yates could see that she was interested in his talk in spite of herself. The bread was now in the pans, and she had drawn out the table to the middle of the floor; the baking board had disappeared, and the surface of the table was cleaned. With a light, deft motion of her two hands she had whisked over its surface the spotlessly white cloth, which flowed in waves over the table and finally settled calmly in its place like the placid face of a pond in the moonlight. Yates realised that the way to success lay in keeping the conversation in his own hands and not depending on any response. In this way a man may best display the store of knowledge he possesses, to the admiration and bewilderment of his audience, even though his store consists merely of samples like the outfit of a commercial traveller; yet a commercial traveller who knows his business can so arrange his samples on the table of his room in a hotel, that they give the onlooker an idea of

the vastness and wealth of the warehouses from which they are drawn.

"Bread," said Yates, with the serious air of a very learned man, "is a most interesting subject. It is a historical subject—it is a biblical subject. As an article of food, it is mentioned oftener in the Bible than any other. It is used in parable and to point a moral. 'Ye must not live on bread alone.'" From the suspicion of a twinkle in the eye of his listener, he feared he had not quoted correctly. He knew he was not now among that portion of his samples with which he was most familiar, so he hastened back to the historical aspect of his subject. Few people could skate over thinner ice than Richard Yates, but his natural shrewdness always caused him to return to more solid footing.

"Now, in this country, bread has gone through three distinct stages, and although I am a strong believer in progress, yet, in the case of our most important article of food, I hold that the bread of to-day is inferior to the bread our mothers used to make, or perhaps, I should say, our grandmothers. This is, unfortunately, rapidly becoming the age of machinery—and machinery, while it may be quicker, is certainly not so thorough as old-fashioned hand-work. There is a new writer in England, named Ruskin, who is very bitter against machinery. He would like to see it abolished—at least, so he says.

I will send for one of his books, and show it to you, if you will let me."

"You, in New York, surely do not call the author of *Modern Painters* and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* a new man. My father has one of his books which must be nearly twenty years old."

This was the longest speech Margaret had made to him, and, as he said afterwards to the professor in describing its effects, it took him right off his feet. He admitted to the professor, but not to the girl, that he had never read a word of Ruskin in his life. The allusion he had made to him he had heard some one else use, and he had worked it into an article before now with telling effect. "As Mr. Ruskin says" looked well in a newspaper column, giving an air of erudition and research to it. Mr. Yates, however, was not at the present moment prepared to enter into a discussion on either the age or the merits of the English writer.

"Ah, well," he said, "technically speaking, of course, Ruskin is not a new man. What I meant was that he is looked on—ah—in New York as—that is—you know—as comparatively new—comparatively new. But as I was saying about bread, the old log-house era of bread, as I might call it, produced the most delicious loaf ever made in this country. It was the salt-rising kind, and was baked in a round, flat-bottomed iron kettle. Did you ever see the baking kettle of other days?"

"I think Mrs. Bartlett has one, although she never uses it now. It was placed on the hot embers, was it not?"

"Exactly," said Yates, noting with pleasure that the girl was thawing, as he expressed it to himself. "The hot coals were drawn out and the kettle placed upon them. When the lid was in position, hot coals were put on the top of it. The bread was firm and white and sweet inside, with the most delicious golden-brown crust all around. Ah, that was bread! but perhaps I appreciated it because I was always hungry in those days. Then came the alleged improvement of the tin Dutch oven. That was the second stage in the evolution of bread in this country. It also belonged to the log-house and open-fireplace era. Bread baked by direct heat from the fire and reflected heat from the polished tin. I think our present cast-iron stove arrangement is preferable to that, although not up to the old-time kettle."

If Margaret had been a reader of the New York *Argus*, she would have noticed that the facts set forth by her visitor had already appeared in that paper, much elaborated, in an article entitled "Our Daily Bread." In the pause that ensued after Yates had finished his dissertation on the staff of life, the stillness was broken by a long wailing cry. It began with one continued sustained note, and ended with a wail half a tone below the first. The

girl paid no attention to it, but Yates started to his feet.

"In the name of— What's that?"

Margaret smiled, but before she could answer the stillness was again broken by what appeared to be the more distant notes of a bugle.

"The first," she said, "was Kitty Bartlett's voice calling the men home from the field for dinner. Mrs. Bartlett is a very good housekeeper, and is usually a few minutes ahead of the neighbours with the meals. The second was the sound of a horn farther up the road. It is what you would deplore as the age of tin applied to the dinner-call, just as your tin oven supplanted the better bread-maker. I like Kitty's call much better than the tin horn. It seems to me more musical, although it appeared to startle you."

"Oh, you can talk!" cried Yates, with audacious admiration, at which the girl coloured slightly and seemed to retire within herself again. "And you can make fun of people's historical lore too. Which do you use, the tin horn or the natural voice?"

"Neither. If you will look outside you will see a flag at the top of a pole. That is our signal."

It flashed across the mind of Yates, this was intended as an intimation that he might see many things outside to interest him. He felt that his visit had not been at all the brilliant success he

had anticipated. Of course, the quest for bread had been merely an excuse. He had expected to be able to efface the unfavourable impression he knew he had made by his jaunty conversation on the Ridge Road the day before, and he realised that his position was still the same. A good deal of Yates's success in life came from the fact that he never knew when he was beaten. He did not admit defeat now, but he saw he had, for some reason, not gained any advantage in a preliminary skirmish. He concluded it would be well to retire in good order, and renew the contest at some future time. He was so unused to anything like a rebuff that all his fighting qualities were up in arms, and he resolved to show this unimpressionable girl that he was not a man to be lightly valued.

As he rose, the door from the main portion of the house opened, and there entered a woman hardly yet past middle age, who had once been undoubtedly handsome, but on whose worn and faded face was the look of patient weariness which so often is the result of a youth spent in helping a husband to overcome the stumpy stubbornness of an American bush farm. When the farm is conquered, the victor is usually vanquished. It needed no second glance to see that she was the mother from whom the daughter had inherited her good looks. Mrs. Howard did not appear surprised to

see a stranger standing there; in fact, the faculty of being surprised at anything seemed to have left her. Margaret introduced them quietly, and went about her preparation for the meal. Yates greeted Mrs. Howard with effusion. He had come, he said, on a bread mission. He thought he knew something about bread, but he now learned he came too early in the day. He hoped he might have the privilege of repeating his visit.

"But you are not going now?" said Mrs. Howard, with hospitable anxiety.

"I fear I have already stayed too long," answered Yates lingeringly. "My partner, Professor Renmark, is also on a foraging expedition at your neighbours, the Bartletts. He is doubtless back in camp long ago, and will be expecting me."

"No fear of that. Mrs. Bartlett would never let anyone go when there is a meal on the way."

"I am afraid I shall be giving extra trouble by staying. I imagine there is quite enough to do in every farmhouse, without entertaining any chance tramp who happens along. Don't you agree with me for once, Miss Howard?" Yates was reluctant to go, and yet he did not wish to stay unless Margaret added her invitation to her mother's. He felt vaguely that his reluctance did him credit, and that he was improving. He could not remember a time when he had not taken without question whatever the gods sent, and this unaccustomed

qualm of modesty caused him to suspect that there were depths in his nature hitherto unexplored. It always flatters a man to realise that he is deeper than he thought.

Mrs. Howard laughed in a subdued manner because Yates likened himself to a tramp, and Margaret said coldly—

"Mother's motto is that one more or less never makes any difference."

"And what is your motto, Miss Howard?"

"I don't think Margaret has any," said Mrs. Howard, answering for her daughter, "she is like her father. She reads a great deal and doesn't talk much. He would read all the time, if he did not have to work. I see Margaret has already invited you, for she has put an extra plate on the table."

"Ah, then," said Yates, "I shall have much pleasure in accepting both the verbal and the crockery invitation. I am sorry for the professor at his lonely meal by the tent; for he is a martyr to duty, and I feel sure Mrs. Bartlett will not be able to keep him."

Before Mrs. Howard could reply, there floated in to them from the outside, where Margaret was, a cheery voice which Yates had no difficulty in recognising as belonging to Miss Kitty Bartlett.

"Hello, Margaret!" she said. "Is he here?"

The reply was inaudible.

"Oh, you know whom I mean. That conceited city fellow."

There was evidently an admonition and a warning.

"Well, I don't care if he does. I'll tell him so to his face. It might do him good."

Next moment there appeared a pretty vision in the doorway. On the fair curls, which were flying about her shoulders, had been carelessly placed her brother's straw hat, with a broad and torn brim. Her face was flushed with running; and of the fact that she was a very lovely girl there was not the slightest doubt.

"How de do?" she said to Mrs. Howard, and nodding to Yates, cried, "I knew you were here, but I came over to make sure. There's going to be war in our house. Mother's made a prisoner of the professor already, but he doesn't know it. He thinks he's going back to the tent, and she's packing up the things he wanted, and doing it awfully slow, till I get back. He said you would be sure to be waiting for him out in the woods. We both told him there was no fear of that. You wouldn't leave a place where there was good cooking for all the professors in the world."

"You are a wonderful judge of character, Miss Bartlett," said Yates, somewhat piqued by her frankness.

"Of course I am. The professor knows ever so much more than you, but he doesn't know when

he's well off, just the same. You do. He's a quiet, stubborn man."

"And which do you admire the most, Miss Bartlett, a quiet, stubborn man, or one who is conceited?"

Miss Kitty laughed heartily, without the slightest trace of embarrassment. "Detest, you mean. I'm sure I don't know. Margaret, which is the most objectionable?"

Margaret looked reproachfully at her neighbour on being thus suddenly questioned, but said nothing.

Kitty, laughing again, sprang towards her friend, dabbed a little kiss, like the peck of a bird, on each cheek, cried, "Well, I must be off or mother will have to tie up the professor to keep him," and was off accordingly, with the speed and lightness of a young fawn.

"Extraordinary girl," remarked Yates, as the flutter of curls and calico dress disappeared.

"She is a good girl," cried Margaret emphatically.

"Bless me, I said nothing to the contrary. But don't you think she is somewhat free with her opinions about other people?" asked Yates.

"She did not know that you were within hearing when she first spoke, and after that she brazened it out. That's her way. But she's a kind girl and good-hearted, otherwise she would not have taken the trouble to come over here merely because your friend happened to be surly."

"Oh, Renny is anything but surly," said Yates, as quick to defend his friend as she was to stand up for hers. "As I was saying a moment ago, he is a martyr to duty, and if he thought I was at the camp, nothing would keep him. Now he will have a good dinner in peace when he knows I am not waiting for him, and a good dinner is more than he will get when I take to the cooking."

By this time the silent signal on the flag-pole had done its work, and Margaret's father and brother arrived from the field. They put their broad straw hats on the roof of the kitchen verandah, and, taking water in a tin basin from the rain barrel, placed it on a bench outside and proceeded to wash vigorously.

Mr. Howard was much more interested in his guest than his daughter had apparently been. Yates talked glibly, as he could always do if he had a sympathetic audience, and he showed an easy familiarity with the great people of this earth, that was fascinating to a man who had read much of them, but who was, in a measure, locked out of the bustling world. Yates knew many of the generals in the late war, and all of the politicians. Of the latter, there was not an honest man among them, according to the reporter; of the former, there were few who had not made the most ghastly mistakes. He looked on the world as a vast hoard of commonplace people, wherein the men of real

genius were buried out of sight, if there were any men of genius, which he seemed to doubt, and those on the top were there either through their own intrigues, or because they had been forced up by circumstances. His opinions sometimes caused a look of pain to cross the face of the older man, who was enthusiastic in his quiet way, and had his heroes. He would have been a strong Republican if he had lived in the States; and he had watched the four years' struggle, through the papers, with keen and absorbed interest. The North had been fighting, in his opinion, for the great and undying principal of human liberty, and had deservedly won. Yates had no such delusion. It was a politician's war, he said. Principle wasn't in it. The North would have been quite willing to let slavery stand, if the situation had not been forced by the firing on Fort Sumpter. Then the conduct of the war did not at all meet the approval of Mr. Yates.

"Oh yes," he said, "I suppose Grant will go down into history as a great general. The truth is, that he simply knew how to subtract. That is all there is in it. He had the additional boon of an utter lack of imagination. We had many generals who were greater than Grant, but they were troubled with imaginations. Imagination will ruin the best general in the world. Now take yourself, for example. If you were to kill a man

unintentionally, your conscience would trouble you all the rest of your life. Think how you would feel, then, if you were to cause the death of ten thousand men all in a lump. It would break you down. The mistake an ordinary man makes may result in the loss of a few dollars, which can be replaced; but if a general makes a mistake, the loss can never be made up, for his mistakes are estimated by the lives of men. He says 'Go,' when he should have said 'Come.' He says 'Attack,' when he should have said 'Retreat.' What is the result? Five, ten, or fifteen thousand men, many of them better men than he is, left dead on the field. Grant had nothing of this feeling. He simply knew how to subtract, as I said before. It is like this. You have fifty thousand men and I have twenty-five thousand. When I kill twenty-five thousand of your men and you kill twenty-five thousand of my men, you have twenty-five thousand left and I have none. You are the victor, and the thoughtless crowd howls about you, but that does not make you out the greatest general by a long shot. If Lee had had Grant's number, and Grant had Lee's, the result would have been reversed. Grant set himself to do this little sum in subtraction, and he did it—did it probably as quickly as any other man would have done it, and he knew that when it was done, the war would have to stop. That's all there was to it."

The older man shook his head. "I doubt," he said, "if history will take your view either of the motives of those in power or of the way the war was carried on. It was a great and noble struggle, heroically fought by those deluded people who were in the wrong, and stubbornly contested at immense self-sacrifice by those who were in the right."

"What a pity it was," said young Howard to the newspaper man, with a rudeness that drew a frown from his father, "that you didn't get to show 'em how to carry on the war."

"Well," said Yates, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "I flatter myself that I would have given them some valuable pointers. Still, it is too late to bemoan their neglect now."

"Oh, you may have a chance yet," continued the unabashed young man. "They say the Fenians are coming over here this time sure. You ought to volunteer either on our side or on theirs, and show how a war ought to be carried on."

"Oh, there's nothing in the Fenian scare! They won't venture over. They fight with their mouths. It's the safest way."

"I believe you," said the youth significantly.

Perhaps it was because the boy had been so inconsiderate as to make these remarks, that Yates received a cordial invitation from both Mr. and Mrs. Howard to visit the farm as often as he cared

to do so. Of this privilege Yates resolved to avail himself, but he would have prized it more if Miss Margaret had added her word—which she did not, perhaps because she was so busy looking after the bread. Yates knew, however, that with a woman, apparent progress is rarely synonymous with real progress. This knowledge soothed his disappointment.

As he walked back to the camp, he reviewed his own feelings with something like astonishment. The march of events was rapid even for him, who was not slow in anything he undertook.

"It is the result of leisure," he said to himself. "It is the first breathing time I have had for fifteen years. Not two days of my vacation gone, and here I am hopelessly in love."

CHAPTER VII

YATES had intended to call at the Bartletts' and escort Renmark back to the woods; but when he got outside he forgot the existence of the professor, and wandered somewhat aimlessly up the side-road, switching at the weeds that always grow in great profusion along the ditches of a Canadian country thoroughfare. The day was sunny and warm, and, as Yates wandered on in the direction of the forest, he thought of many things. He had feared that he would find life deadly dull so far from New York, without even the consolation of a morning paper, the feverish reading of which had become a sort of vice with him, like smoking. He had imagined that he could not exist without his morning paper, but he now realised that it was not nearly so important a factor in life as he had supposed; yet he sighed when he thought of it, and wished he had one with him of current date. He could now, for the first time in many years, read a paper without that vague fear which always possessed him when he took up an opposition sheet, still damp from the press.

Before he could enjoy it, his habit was to scan it over rapidly to see if it contained any item of news which he himself had missed the previous day. The impending "scoop" hangs over the head of the newspaper man like the sword so often quoted. Great as the joy of beating the opposition press is, it never takes the poignancy of the sting away from a beating received. If a terrible disaster took place, and another paper gave fuller particulars than the *Argus* did, Yates found himself almost wishing the accident had not occurred, although he recognised such a wish as decidedly unprofessional.

Richard's idea of the correct spirit in a reporter was exemplified by an old broken-down, out-of-work, morning newspaper-man, who had not long before committed suicide at an hour in the day too late for the evening papers to get the sensational item. He had sent in to the paper, for which he formerly worked, a full account of the fatality, accurately headed and sub-headed; and, in his note to the city editor, he told why he had chosen the hour of 7 p.m. as the time for his departure from an unappreciative world.

"Ah, well," said Yates under his breath, and suddenly pulling himself together, "I mustn't think of New York, if I intend to stay here for a couple of weeks. I'll be city-sick the first thing, I know, and then I'll make a break for the metropolis. This will never do. The air here is enchanting, it

fills a man with new life. This is the spot for me, and I'll stick to it till I'm right again. Hang New York! But I mustn't think of Broadway, or I'm done for."

He came to the spot in the road where he could see the white side of the tent under the dark trees, and climbed up on the rail fence, sitting there for a few moments. The occasional call of a quail from a neighbouring field was the only sound that broke the intense stillness. The warm smell of spring was in the air. The buds had but recently broken, and the woods, intensely green, had a look of newness and freshness that was comforting to the eye and grateful to the other senses. The world seemed to be but lately made. The young man breathed deeply of the vivifying air, and said, "No, there's nothing the matter with this place, Dick. New York's a fool to it." Then, with a sigh, he added, "If I can stand it for two weeks. I wonder how the boys are getting on without me."

In spite of himself, his thoughts kept drifting back to the great city, although he told himself that it wouldn't do. He gazed at the peaceful, spreading landscape, but his eyes were vacant and he saw nothing. The roar of the streets was in his ears. Suddenly his reverie was broken by a voice from the forest.

"I say, Yates, where's the bread?"

Yates looked quickly around, somewhat startled, and saw the professor coming towards him.

"The bread? I forgot all about it. No; I didn't, either. They were baking, that was it. I am to go for it later in the day. What loot did you rake in, professor?"

"Vegetables mostly."

"That's all right. Have a good dinner?"

"Excellent."

"So did I. Renny, when you interrupted me, I was just counting the farmhouses in sight. What do you say to boarding round among them? You are a schoolmaster, and ought to know all about it. Isn't education in this country encouraged by paying the teacher as little as possible, and letting him take it out in eating his way from one house to another? Ever board around, Renny?"

"Never. If the custom once existed in Canada, it is out of date now."

"That's a pity. I hate to face my own cooking, Renmark. We become less brave as we grow older. By the way, how is old man Bartlett? As well as could be expected?"

"He seemed much as usual. Mrs. Bartlett has sent out two chairs to the tent; she fears we will get rheumatism if we sit on the ground."

"She is a kind woman, Renny, and a thoughtful. And that reminds me, I have a hammock somewhere among my belongings. I will swing it up. Chairs are comfortable, but a hammock is luxury."

Yates slid down from the fence-top, and together

the two men walked to the tent. The hammock was unfurled and slung between two trees. Yates tested it cautiously, and finally trusted himself to its restful folds of network. He was swaying indolently several feet from the ground, when he said to Renmark—

"I call this paradise—paradise regained; but it will be paradise lost next month. Now, professor, I am ready to do the cooking, but I have a fancy for doing it by proxy. The general directs, and the useful prosaic man executes. Where are your vegetables, Renny? Potatoes and carrots, eh? Very good. Now, you may wash them, Renny; but first, you must bring some water from the spring."

The professor was a patient man, and he obeyed. Yates continued to swing in the hammock, alternating directions with rhapsodies on the beauties of the day and the stillness of the woods. Renmark said but little, and attended strictly to the business in hand. The vegetables finished, he took a book from his valise, tilted a chair back against a tree, and began to read.

"I'm depending upon you for the bread," he said to the drowsy man in the hammock.

"Right you are, Renny. Your confidence is not misplaced. I shall presently journey down into the realms of civilisation, and fill the long-felt want. I shall go to the Howards by way of the Bartlett homestead, but I warn you that if there is

a meal on, at either place, you will not have me here to test your first efforts at cookery. So you may have to wait until breakfast for my opinion."

Yates extricated himself slowly and reluctantly from the hammock, and looked regretfully at it when he stood once more on the ground.

"This mad struggle for bread, professor, is the curse of life here below. It is what we are all after. If it were not for the necessity of bread and clothing, what a good time a fellow might have. Well, my blessing, Renny. Good-bye."

Yates strolled slowly through the woods, until he came to the beginning of a lane which led to the Bartlett homestead. He saw the farmer and his son at work in the back fields. From between the distant house and barn there arose, straight up into the still air, a blue column of smoke, which, reaching a certain height, spread out like a thin hazy cloud above the dwelling. At first, Yates thought that some of the outhouses were on fire, and he quickened his pace to a run; but a moment's reflection showed him that the column was plainly visible to the workers in the fields, and that if anything were wrong they would not continue placidly at their labour. When he had walked the long length of the lane, and had safely rounded the corner of the barn, he saw, in the open space between that building and the house, a huge camp-fire blazing. From a pole, upheld by two crotched

supports, hung a big iron kettle over the flames. The caldron was full nearly to the brim, and the steam was already beginning to rise from its surface, although the fire had evidently been but recently kindled. The smoke was not now so voluminous, but Kitty Bartlett stood there with a big-brimmed straw hat in her hands, fanning it away from her face, while the hat at the same time protected her rosy countenance from the fire. She plainly was not prepared to receive visitors, and she started when the young man addressed her, flushing still more deeply, apparently annoyed at his unwelcome appearance.

"Good afternoon," he said cordially. "Preparing for washing? I thought Monday was washing-day."

"It is."

"Then I have not been misinformed. And you are not preparing for washing?"

"We are."

Yates laughed so heartily that Kitty, in spite of herself, had to permit a smile to brighten her own features. She always found it difficult to remain solemn for any length of time.

"This is obviously a conundrum," said Yates, ticking off the items on his four fingers. "First, Monday is washing-day. Second, this is not Monday. Third, neither is to-morrow. Fourth, we are preparing for washing. I give it up, Miss Bartlett. Please, tell me the answer."

"The answer is that I am making soap; soft soap, if you know what that is."

"Practically, I don't know what it is; but I have heard the term used in a political connection. In the States, we say that if a man is very diplomatic he uses soft soap, so I suppose it has lubricating qualities. Sam Slick used the term 'soft sawder' in the same way; but what sawder is, soft or hard, I haven't the slightest idea."

"I thought you knew everything, Mr. Yates."

"Me? Bless you, no. I'm a humble gleaner in the field of knowledge. That's why I brought a Toronto professor with me. I want to learn something. Won't you teach me how to make soap?"

"I'm very busy just now. When I said that we were preparing for washing, I should perhaps have told you there was something else we are not prepared for to-day."

"What is that?"

"A visitor."

"Oh, I say, Miss Bartlett, you are a little hard on me. I'm not a visitor. I'm a friend of the family. I want to help. You will find me a most diligent student. Won't you give me a chance?"

"All the hard work's done. But perhaps you knew that before you came."

Yates looked at her reproachfully, and sighed deeply.

"That's what it is to be a misunderstood man. So you think, among other bad qualities, I have the habit of shirking work? Let me tell you, Miss Bartlett, that the reason I am here is because I have worked too hard. Now confess that you are sorry for what you said—trampling on an already down-trodden man."

Kitty laughed merrily at this, and Yates laughed also, for his sense of comradeship was strong.

"You don't look as if you had ever worked in your life; I don't believe you know what work is."

"But there are different kinds of labour. Don't you call writing, work?"

"No."

"That's just where you're mistaken. It is, and hard work too. I'll tell you about the newspaper business if you'll tell me about soap-making. Fair exchange. I wish you would take me as a pupil, Miss Bartlett; you would find me quick at picking up things."

"Well, then, pick up that pail and draw a pailful of water."

"I'll do it," cried Yates sternly; "I'll do it, though it blast me."

Yates picked up the wooden pail, painted blue on the outside, with a red stripe near the top for ornament, and cream-coloured inside. It was called a "patent pail" in those days, as it was a comparatively recent innovation, being cheaper,

lighter, and stronger than the tin pail which it was rapidly replacing. At the well was a stout pole, pinned through the centre to the upright support on which it swung, like the walking beam of an engine. The thick end, which rested on the ground, was loaded with heavy stones; while from the thin end, high in the air, there dangled over the mouth of the well a slim pole with a hook. This hook was ingeniously furnished with a spring of hickory, which snapped when the handle of the pail was placed on the hook, and prevented the "patent" utensil from slipping off when it was lowered to the surface of the water. Yates speedily recognised the usefulness of this contrivance, for he found that the filling of a wooden pail in a deep well was not the simple affair it looked. The bucket bobbed about on the surface of the water. Once he forgot the necessity of keeping a stout grip on the pole, and the next instant the pail came up to the sunlight with a suddenness that was terrifying. Only an equally sudden backward jump on Yates's part saved his head. Miss Bartlett was pleased to look upon this incident as funny. Yates was so startled by the unexpected revolt of the pail, that his native courtesy did not get a chance to prevent Kitty from drawing up the water herself. She lowered the vessel, pulling down the pole in a hand-over-hand manner that the young man thought decidedly fetching, and then she gave an almost imperceptible

twist to the arrangement that resulted in instant success. The next thing Yates knew, the full pail was resting on the well kerb, and the hickory spring had given the click that released the handle.

"There," said Kitty, suppressing her merriment, "that's how it's done."

"I see the result, Miss Bartlett; but I'm not sure I can do the trick. These things are not so simple as they seem. What is the next step?"

"Pour the water into the leach."

"Into the what?"

"Into the leach, I said. Where else?"

"Oh, I'm up a tree again. I see I don't even know the A B C of this business. In the old days, the leech was a physician. You don't mean, I'm to drown a doctor?"

"This is the leach," said Kitty, pointing to a large, yellowish, upright wooden cylinder, which rested on some slanting boards, down the surface of which ran a brownish liquid that dripped into a trough.

As Yates stood on a bench with the pail in his hand, he saw that the cylinder was filled nearly to the top with sodden wood ashes. He poured in the water, and it sank quickly out of sight.

"So this is part of the soap-making equipment?" he said, stepping down; "I thought the iron kettle over the fire was the whole factory. Tell me about the leach."

"That is where the hard work of soap-making comes in," said Kitty, stirring the contents of the iron kettle with a long stick. "Keeping the leach supplied with water at first is no fun, for then the ashes are dry. If you put in five more pails of water, I will tell you about it."

"Right," cried Yates, pleased to see that the girl's evident objection to his presence at first was fast disappearing. "Now you'll understand how energetic I am. I'm a handy man about a place."

When he had completed his task, she was still stirring the thickening liquid in the caldron, guarding her face from the fire with her big straw hat. Her clustering, tangled fair hair was down about her shoulders; and Yates, as he put the pail in its place, when it had been emptied the fifth time, thought she formed a very pretty picture standing there by the fire, even if she were making soft soap.

"The wicked genii has finished the task set him by the fairy princess. Now for the reward. I want all the particulars about the leach. In the first place, where do you get this huge wooden cylinder that I have, without apparent effect, been pouring water into. Is it manufactured or natural?"

"Both. It is a section of the buttonwood tree."

"Buttonwood? I don't think I ever heard of that. I know the beech and the maple, and some kinds of oak, but there my wood-lore ends. Why the buttonwood?"

"The buttonwood happens to be exactly suited to the purpose. It is a tree that is very fine to look at. It seems all right, but it generally isn't. It is hollow or rotten within, and even when sound, the timber made from it is of little value, as it doesn't last. Yet you can't tell until you begin to chop whether it is of any use or not." Kitty shot a quick glance at the young man, who was sitting on a log watching her.

"Go on, Miss Bartlett; I see what you mean. There are men like the buttonwood tree. The woods are full of them. I've met lots of that kind, fair to look upon, but hollow. Of course you don't mean anything personal; for you must have seen my worth by the way I stuck to the water-hauling. But go on."

"Dear me, I never thought of such a thing; but a guilty conscience, they say"— said Kitty, with a giggle.

"Of course, they say; but it's wrong, like most other things they say. It's the man with the guilty conscience who looks you straight in the eye. Now that the buttonwood is chopped down, what's the next thing to be done?"

"It is sawn off at the proper length; square at one end and slanting at the other."

"Why slanting?"

"Don't you see the foundation of plank on which it rests is inclined, so the end of the leach that is

down must be slantingly cut, otherwise it would not stand perpendicularly. It would topple over in the first windstorm."

"I see, I see. Then they haul it in and set it up?"

"Oh dear no; not yet. They build a fire in it when it gets dry enough."

"Really? I think I understand the comprehensive scheme, but I slip up on the details, as when I tried to submerge that wooden pail. What's the fire for?"

"To burn out what remains of the soft inside wood, so as to leave only the hard outside shell. Then the charing of the inner surface is supposed to make the leach better — more watertight perhaps."

"Quite so. Then it is hauled in and set up?"

"Yes; and gradually filled with ashes. When it is full, we pour the water in it, and catch the lye as it drips out. This is put in the caldron with grease, pig skins, and that sort of thing, and when it boils long enough, the result is soft soap."

"And if you boil it too long, what is the result?"

"Hard soap, I suppose. I never boil it too long."

The conversation was here interrupted by a hissing in the fire, caused by the tumultuous boiling over of the soap. Kitty hurriedly threw in a basin of cold lye, and stirred the mixture vigorously.

"You see," she said reproachfully, "the result of keeping me talking nonsense to you. Now you will have to make up for it by bringing in some wood and putting more water into the leach."

"With the utmost pleasure," cried Yates, springing to his feet. "It is a delight to atone for a fault by obeying your commands."

The girl laughed. "Buttonwood," she said.

Before Yates could think of anything to say in reply, Mrs. Bartlett appeared at the back door.

"How is the soap getting on, Kitty?" she asked. "Why, Mr. Yates, are you here?"

"Am I here? I should say I was. Very much here. I'm the hired man. I'm the hewer of wood and the hauler of water, or to speak more correctly, I'm the hauler of both. And besides, I've been learning how to make soap, Mrs. Bartlett."

"Well, it won't hurt you to know how."

"You bet it won't. When I get back to New York, the first thing I shall do will be to chop down a buttonwood tree in the park, if I can find one, and set up a leach for myself. Lye comes useful in running a paper."

Mrs. Bartlett's eyes twinkled, for although she did not quite understand his nonsense, she knew it was nonsense, and she had a liking for frivolous persons, her own husband being so sombre-minded.

"Tea is ready," she said. "Of course you will stay, Mr. Yates."

"Really, Mrs. Bartlett, I cannot conscientiously do so. I haven't earned a meal since the last one. No; my conscience won't let me accept, but thank you all the same."

"Nonsense; my conscience won't let you go away hungry. If nobody were to eat but those who earn their victuals, there would be more starving people in the world than there are. Of course you'll stay."

"Now, that's what I like, Mrs. Bartlett. I like to have a chance of refusing an invitation I yearn for, and then be forced to accept. That's true hospitality." Then in a whisper he added to Kitty, "If you dare to say 'buttonwood,' Miss Bartlett, you and I will quarrel."

But Kitty said nothing, now that her mother had appeared on the scene, but industriously stirred the contents of the iron kettle.

"Kitty," said the mother, "you call the men to supper."

"I can't leave this," said Kitty, flushing; "it will boil over. You call, mother."

So Mrs. Bartlett held her open palms on each side of her mouth, and gave the long wailing cry, which was faintly answered from the fields, and Yates, who knew a thing or two, noted with secret satisfaction that Kitty had refused, doubtless because he was there.

CHAPTER VIII

I TELL you what it is, Renny," said Yates, a few days after the soap episode, as he swung in his hammock at the camp; "I'm learning something new every day."

"Not really?" asked the professor in surprise.

"Yes, really. I knew it would astonish you. My chief pleasure in life, professor, is the surprising of you. I sometimes wonder why it delights me; it is so easily done."

"Never mind about that. What have you been learning?"

"Wisdom, my boy; wisdom in solid chunks. In the first place, I am learning to admire the resourcefulness of these people around us. Practically they make everything they need. They are the most self-helping people that I was ever thrown among. I look upon theirs as the ideal life."

"I think you said something like that when we first came here."

"I said that, you ass, about camping out. I am talking now about farm-life. Farmers eliminate the middle-man pretty effectually, and that in itself is

going a long way towards complete happiness. Take the making of soap, that I told you about; there you have it, cheap and good. When you've made it, you know what is in it, and I'll be hanged if you do when you pay a big price for it in New York. Here they make pretty nearly everything they need, except the waggon and the crockery; and I'm not sure but they made them a few years back. Now, when a man with a good sharp axe and a jack-knife, can do anything from building his house to whittling out a chair, he's the most independent man on earth. Nobody lives better than these people do. Everything is fresh, sweet, and good. Perhaps the country air helps; but it seems to me, I never tasted such meals as Mrs. Bartlett, for instance, gets up. They buy nothing at the stores except the tea, and I confess I prefer milk myself. My tastes were always simple."

"And what is the deduction?"

"Why, that this is the proper way to live. Old Hiram has an anvil and an amateur forge. He can tinker up almost anything, and that eliminates the blacksmith. Howard has a bench, saws, hammers, and other tools, and that eliminates the carpenter. The women eliminate the baker, the soap-boiler, and a lot of other parasites. Now, when you have eliminated all the middle-men, then comes independence, and consequently, com-

plete happiness. You can't keep happiness away with a shot-gun then."

"But what is to become of the blacksmith, the carpenter, and all the rest?"

"Let them take up land and be happy too; there's plenty of land. The land is waiting for them. Then look how the master is eliminated. That's the most beautiful riddance of all. Even the carpenter and blacksmith usually have to work under a boss; and if not, they have to depend on the men who employ them. The farmer has to please nobody but himself. That adds to his independence. That's why old Hiram is ready to fight the first comer on the slightest provocation. He doesn't care whom he offends, so long as it isn't his wife. These people know how to make what they want, and what they can't make, they do without. That's the way to form a great nation. You raise, in this way, a self-sustaining, resolute, unconquerable people. The reason the North conquered the South, was because we drew our armies mostly from the self-reliant farming class, while we had to fight a people accustomed for generations to having things done for them."

"Why don't you buy a farm, Yates?"

"Several reasons. I am spoiled for the life here. I am like the drunkard who admires a temperate life, yet can't pass a gin-shop. The city virus is in my blood. And then, perhaps, after all, I am not

quite satisfied with the tendency of farm life; it is unfortunately in a transition state. It is at the frame-house stage, and will soon blossom into the red-brick stage. The log-house era is what I yearn for. Then, everything a person needed was made on the farm. When the brick-house era sets in, the middle-man will be rampant. I saw the other day at the Howard's, a set of ancient stones that interested me as much as an Assyrian marble would interest you. They were old, home-made mill stones, and they have not been used since the frame-house was built. The grist mill at the village put them out of date. And just here, notice the subtlety of the crafty middle-man. The farmer takes his grist to the mill, and the miller does not charge him cash for grinding it. He takes toll out of the bags, and the farmer has a vague idea that he gets his grinding for almost nothing. The old way was the best, Renny, my boy. The farmer's son won't be as happy in the brick-house which the mason will build for him, as his grandfather was in the log-house he built for himself. And fools call this change, the advance of civilisation."

"There is something to be said for the old order of things," admitted Renmark. "If a person could unite the advantages of what we call civilisation with the advantages of a pastoral life, he would inaugurate a condition of things that would be truly idyllic."

"That's so, Renmark, that's so!" cried Yates

enthusiastically. "A brown stone mansion on Fifth Avenue, and a log-hut on the shores of Lake Superior! That would suit me down to the ground. Spend half the year in each place."

"Yes," said the professor meditatively; "a log-hut on the rocks and under the trees, with the lake in front, would be very nice if the hut had a good library attached."

"And a daily paper. Don't forget the press."

"No. I draw the line there. The daily paper would mean the daily steamer or the daily train. The one would frighten away the fish, and the other would disturb the stillness with its whistle."

Yates sighed. "I forgot about the drawbacks," he said. "That's the trouble with civilisation. You can't have the things you want, without bringing in their trail so many things you don't want. I shall have to give up the daily paper."

"Then there is another objection, worse than either steamer or train."

"What's that?"

"The daily paper itself."

Yates sat up indignantly.

"Renmark!" he cried, "that's blasphemy. For heaven's sake, man, hold something sacred. If you don't respect the press, what do you respect? Not my most cherished feelings at any rate, or you wouldn't talk in that flippant manner. If you speak kindly of my daily paper, I'll tolerate your library."

"And that reminds me—have you brought any books with you, Yates? I have gone through most of mine already, although many of them will bear going over again; still, I have so much time on my hands, that I think I may indulge in a little general reading. When you wrote asking me to meet you in Buffalo, I thought you perhaps intended to tramp through the country, so I did not bring as many books with me as I should have done if I had known you were going to camp out."

Yates sprang from the hammock.

"Books? Well, I should say so! Perhaps you think I don't read anything but the daily papers. I'd have you know that I am something of a reader myself. You mustn't imagine you monopolise all the culture in the township, professor."

The young man went into the tent, and shortly returned with an armful of yellow-covered, paper-bound small volumes, which he flung in profusion at the feet of the man from Toronto. They were mostly Beadle's Dime Novels, which had a great sale at the time.

"There," he said, "you have quantity, quality, and variety, as I have before remarked. *The Murderous Sioux of Kalamazoo;* that's a good one. A hair-raising Indian story in every sense of the word. The one you are looking at is a pirate story, judging by the burning ship on the cover. But for first-class highwaymen yarns, this other edition is the

best. That's the *Sixteen String Jack* set. They're immense, if they do cost a quarter each. You must begin at the right volume, or you'll be sorry. You see, they never really end, although every volume is supposed to be complete in itself. They leave off at the most exciting point, and are continued in the next volume. I call that a pretty good idea, but it's rather exasperating if you begin at the last book. You'll enjoy this lot. I'm glad I brought them along."

"It is a blessing," said Renmark, with the ghost of a smile about his lips. "I can truthfully say that they are entirely new to me."

"That's all right, my boy," cried Yates loftily, with a wave of his hand. "Use them as if they were your own."

Renmark arose leisurely and picked up a quantity of the books.

"These will do excellently for lighting our morning camp-fire," he said. "And if you will allow me to treat them as if they were my own, that is the use to which I will put them. You surely do not mean to say that you read such trash as this, Yates?"

"Trash?" exclaimed Yates indignantly. "It serves me right. That's what a man gets for being decent to you, Renny. Well, you're not compelled to read them; but if you put one of them in the fire, your stupid treatises will follow, if they are

not too solid to burn. You don't know good literature when you see it."

The professor, buoyed up perhaps by the conceit which comes to a man through the possession of a real sheep's-skin diploma, granted by a university of good standing, did not think it necessary to defend his literary taste. He busied himself in pruning a stick he had cut in the forest, and finally he got it into the semblance of a walking-cane. He was an athletic man, and the indolence of camp-life did not suit him as it did Yates. He tested the stick in various ways, when he had trimmed it to his satisfaction.

"Are you ready for a ten-mile walk?" he asked of the man in the hammock.

"Good gracious, no. Man wants but little walking here below, and he doesn't want it ten miles in length either. I'm easily satisfied. You're off, are you? Well, so long. And I say, Renny, bring back some bread when you return to camp. It's the one safe thing to do."

CHAPTER IX

RENMARK walked through the woods and then across the fields, until he came to the road. He avoided the habitations of man as much as he could, for he was neither so sociably inclined nor so frequently hungry as was his companion. He strode along the road, not caring much where it led him. Everyone he met gave him "Good-day," after the friendly custom of the country. Those with waggons or lighter vehicles going in his direction usually offered him a ride, and went on, wondering that a man should choose to walk when it was not compulsory. The professor, like most silent men, found himself good company, and did not feel the need of companionship in his walks. He had felt relieved rather than disappointed when Yates refused to accompany him. And Yates, swinging drowsily in his hammock, was no less gratified. Even where men are firm and intimate friends, the first few days of camping out together is a severe strain on their regard for each other. If Damon and Pythias had occupied a tent together for a week, the worst enemy of either, or

both, might at the end of that time have ventured into the camp in safety, and would have been welcome.

Renmark thought of these things as he walked along. His few days' intimacy with Yates had shown him how far apart they had managed to get, by following paths that diverged more and more widely the farther they were trodden. The friendship of their youth had turned out to be merely ephemeral. Neither would now choose the other as an intimate associate. Another illusion had gone.

"I have surely enough self-control," said Renmark to himself, as he walked on, "to stand his shallow flippancy for another week, and not let him see what I think of him."

Yates at the same time was thoroughly enjoying the peaceful silence of the camp. "That man is an exaggerated schoolmaster, with all the faults of the species abnormally developed. If I once open out on him, he will learn more truth about himself in ten minutes than he ever heard in his life before. What an unbearable prig he has grown to be." Thus ran Yates's thoughts as he swung in his hammock, looking up at the ceiling of green leaves.

Nevertheless, the case was not so bad as either of them thought. If it had been, then were marriage not only a failure, but a practical im-

possibility. If two men can get over the first few days in camp without a quarrel, life becomes easier, and the tension relaxes.

Renmark, as he polished off his ten miles, paid little heed to those he met; but one driver drew up his horse and accosted him.

"Good-day," he said. "How are you getting on in the tent?"

The professor was surprised at the question. Had their tenting-out eccentricity gone all over the country? He was not a quick man at recognising people, belonging, as he did, to the "I-remember-your-face-but-can't-recall-your-name" fraternity. It had been said of him, that he never, at any one time, knew the names of more than half a dozen students in his class; but this was an undergraduate libel on him. The young man who had accosted him was driving a single horse, attached to what was termed a "democrat," — a four-wheeled, light waggon, not so slim and elegant as a buggy, nor so heavy and clumsy as a waggon. Renmark looked up at the driver with confused unrecognition, troubled because he vaguely felt that he had met him somewhere before. But his surprise at being addressed speedily changed into amazement, as he looked from the driver to the load. The "democrat" was heaped with books. The larger volumes were stuck along the sides with some regularity, and in this way kept

the miscellaneous pile from being shaken out on the road. His eye glittered with a new interest as it rested on the many coloured bindings; and he recognised in the pile, the peculiar brown covers of the "Bohn" edition of classic translations, that were scattered like so many turnips over the top of this ridge of literature. He rubbed his eyes to make sure he was not dreaming. How came a farmer's boy to be driving a waggon-load of books in the wilds of the country, as nonchalantly as if they were so many bushels of potatoes?

The young driver, who had stopped his horse, for the load was heavy and the sand was deep, saw that the stranger not only did not recognise him, but that from the moment he saw the books he had forgotten everything else. It was evidently necessary to speak again.

"If you are coming back, will you have a ride?" he asked.

"I—I think I will," said the professor, descending to earth again and climbing up beside the boy.

"I see you don't remember me," said the latter, starting his horse again. "My name is Howard. I passed you in my buggy when you were coming in with your tent that day on the Ridge. Your partner—what's his name—Yates, isn't it?—had dinner at our house the other day."

"Ah, yes. I recollect you now. I thought I had seen you before; but it was only for a moment,

you know. I have a very poor memory so far as people are concerned. It has always been a failing of mine. Are these your books? And how do you happen to have such a quantity?"

"Oh, this is the library," said young Howard.

"The library?"

"Yes, the township library, you know."

"Oh! The township has a library, then? I didn't know."

"Well, it's part of it. This is a fifth part. You know about township libraries, don't you? Your partner said you were a college man."

Renmark blushed at his own ignorance, but he was never reluctant to admit it.

"I ought to be ashamed to confess it, but I know nothing of township libraries. Please tell me about them."

Young Howard was eager to give information to a college man, especially on the subject of books, which he regarded as belonging to the province of college-bred men. He was pleased also to discover that city people did not know everything. He had long had the idea that they did, and this belief had been annoyingly corroborated by the cocksureness of Yates. The professor evidently was a decent fellow, who did not pretend to universal knowledge. This was encouraging. He liked Renmark better than Yates, and was glad he had offered him a ride, although, of course, that

was the custom ; still, a person with one horse and a heavy load is exempt on a sandy road.

"Well, you see," he said in explanation, "it's like this. The township votes a sum of money, say a hundred dollars, or two hundred, as the case may be. They give notice to the Government of the amount voted, and the Government adds the same amount to the township money. It's like the old game : you think of a number, and they double it. The Government has a depository of books, in Toronto, I think, and they sell them cheaper than the book-stores do. At any rate, the four hundred dollars' worth are bought, or whatever the amount is, and the books are the property of the township. Five persons are picked out in the township as librarians, and they have to give security. My father is librarian for this section. The library is divided into five parts, and each librarian gets a share. Once a year I go to the next section and get all their books. They go to the next section, again, and get all the books at that place. A man comes to our house to-day and takes all we have. So we get a complete change every year, and in five years we get back the first batch, which by that time we have forgotten all about. To-day is changing day all around."

"And the books are lent to any person in each section who wishes to read them?" asked the professor.

"Yes. Margaret keeps a record, and a person can have a book out for two weeks; after that time there is a fine, but Margaret never fines anyone."

"And do people have to pay to take out the books?"

"Not likely!" said Howard, with fine contempt. "You wouldn't expect people to pay for reading books; would you, now?"

"No, I suppose not. And who selected the volumes?"

"Well, the township can select the books if it likes, or it can send a committee to select them; but they didn't think it worth the trouble and expense. People grumbled enough at wasting money on books as it was, even if they did buy them at half-price. Still, others said it was a pity not to get the money out of the Government when they had the chance. I don't believe any of them cared very much about the books, except father and a few others. So the Government chose the books. They'll do that if you leave it to them. And a queer lot of trash they sent, if you take my word for it. I believe they shoved off on us all the things no one else would buy. Even when they did pick out novels, they were just as tough as the history books. *Adam Bede* is one. They say that's a novel. I tried it, but I would rather read the history of Josephus any day. There's some fighting in that, if it is a history. Then,

there's any amount of biography books. They're no good. There's a *History of Napoleon.* Old Bartlett's got that, and he won't give it up. He says he was taxed for the library against his will. He dares them to go to law about it, and it ain't worth while for one book. The other sections are all asking for that book, not that they want it, but the whole country knows that old Bartlett's a-holding on to it, so they'd like see some fun. Bartlett's read that book fourteen times, and it's all he knows. I tell Margaret she ought to fine him, and keep on fining, but she won't do it. I guess Bartlett thinks the book belongs to him by this time. Margaret likes Kitty and Mrs. Bartlett, — so does everybody, — but old Bartlett's a seed. There he sits now on his verandah, and it's a wonder he's not reading the *History of Napoleon.*"

They were passing the Bartlett house, and young Howard raised his voice and called out,—

"I say, Mr. Bartlett, we want that Napoleon book. This is changing day, you know. Shall I come up for it, or will you bring it down? If you fetch it to the gate, I'll cart it home now."

The old man paid no heed to what was said to him; but Mrs. Bartlett, attracted by the outcry, came to the door.

"You go along with your books, you young rascal!" she cried, coming down to the gate when

she saw the professor. "That's a nice way to carry bound books, as if they were a lot of bricks. I'll warrant, you have lost a dozen between Mallory's and here. But easy come, easy go. It's plain to be seen, they didn't cost you anything. I don't know what the world's a-coming to when the township spends its money in books, as if taxes weren't heavy enough already. Won't you come in, Mr. Renmark? Tea's on the table."

"Mr. Renmark's coming with me this trip, Mrs. Bartlett," young Howard said, before the professor had time to reply; "but I'll come over and take tea, if you'll invite me, as soon as I have put the horse up."

"You go along with your nonsense," she said; "I know you." Then, in a lower voice, she asked, "How is your mother, Henry—and Margaret?"

"They're pretty well, thanks."

"Tell them I'm going to run over to see them some day soon, but that need not keep them from coming to see me. The old man's going to town to-morrow," and with this hint, after again inviting the professor to a meal, she departed up the path to the house.

"I think I'll get down here," said Renmark, halfway between the two houses. "I'm very much obliged to you for the ride, and also for what you told me about the books. It was very interesting."

"Nonsense," cried young Howard; "I'm not

going to let you do anything of the sort. You're coming home with me. You want to see the books, don't you? Very well, then, come along. Margaret is always impatient on changing day, she's so anxious to see the books, and father generally comes in early from the fields for the same reason."

As they approached the Howard homestead, they noticed Margaret waiting for them at the gate; but when the girl saw that a stranger was in the waggon, she turned and walked into the house. Renmark, seeing this retreat, regretted he had not accepted Mrs. Bartlett's invitation. He was a sensitive man, and did not realise that others were sometimes as shy as himself. He felt he was intruding, and that at a sacred moment—the moment of the arrival of the library. He was such a lover of books, and valued so highly the privilege of being alone with them, that he fancied he saw in the abrupt departure of Margaret the same feeling of resentment he would himself have experienced, if a visitor had encroached upon him in his favourite nook in the fine room that held the library of the university.

When the waggon stopped in the lane, Renmark said hesitatingly—

"I think I'll not stay, if you don't mind. My friend is waiting for me at the camp, and will be wondering what has become of me."

"Who? Yates? Let him wonder. I guess he never bothers about anybody else, as long as he is

comfortable himself. That's how I sized him up, at any rate. Besides, you're never going back on carrying in the books, are you? I counted on your help. I don't want to do it, and it don't seem the square thing to let Margaret do it all alone; does it, now?"

"Oh, if I can be of any assistance, I shall"—

"Of course you can. Besides, I know my father wants to see you, anyhow. Don't you, father?"

The old man was coming round from the back of the house to meet them.

"Don't I what?" he asked.

"You said you wanted to see Professor Renmark, when Margaret told you what Yates had said to her about him."

Renmark reddened slightly at finding so many people had made him the subject of conversation, rather suspecting at the same time that the boy was making fun of him. Mr. Howard cordially held out his hand.

"So this is Professor Renmark, is it? I am very pleased to see you. Yes, as Henry was saying, I have been wanting to see you ever since my daughter spoke of you. I suppose Henry told you that his brother is a pupil of yours?"

"Oh! is Arthur Howard your son?" cried Renmark, warming up at once. "I did not know it. There are many young men at the college, and I have but the vaguest idea from what parts of the

country they all come. A teacher should have no favourites, but I must confess to a strong liking for your son. He is a good boy, which cannot be said about every member of my class."

"Arthur was always studious, so we thought we would give him a chance. I am glad to hear he behaves himself in the city. Farming is hard work, and I hope my boys will have an easier time than I had. But, come in, come in. The missus and Margaret will be glad to see you, and hear how the boy is coming on with his studies."

So they went in together.

CHAPTER X

HELLO! Hello there! Wake up! Break-fa-a-a-st! I thought that would fetch you. Gosh! I wish I had your job at a dollar a day!"

Yates rubbed his eyes, and sat up in the hammock. At first he thought the forest was tumbling down about his ears, but as he collected his wits, he saw that it was only young Bartlett who had come crashing through the woods on the back of one horse, while he led another by a strap attached to a halter. The echo of his hearty yell still resounded in the depths of the woods, and rang in Yates's ears as he pulled himself together.

"Did you — ah — make any remarks?" asked Yates quietly.

The boy admired his gift of never showing surprise.

"I say, don't you know that it's not healthy to go to sleep in the middle of the day?"

"Is it the middle of the day? I thought it was later. I guess I can stand it, if the middle of the day can. I've a strong constitution. Now, what

do you mean by dashing up on two horses into a man's bedroom in that reckless fashion?"

The boy laughed.

"I thought perhaps you would like a ride. I knew you were alone, for I saw the professor go mooning up the road a little while ago."

"Oh! Where was he going?"

"Hanged if I know, and he didn't look as if he knew himself. He's a queer fish, ain't he?"

"He is. Everybody can't be as sensible and handsome as we are, you know. Where are you going with those horses, young man?"

"To get them shod. Won't you come along? You can ride the horse I'm on. Its got a bridle. I'll ride the one with the halter."

"How far away is the blacksmith's shop?"

"Oh, a couple of miles or so; down at the Cross Roads."

"Well," said Yates, "there's merit in the idea. I take it, your generous offer is made in good faith, and not necessarily for publication."

"I don't understand. What do you mean?"

"There is no concealed joke, is there? No getting me on the back of one of those brutes to make a public exhibition of me? Do they bite or kick or buck, or playfully roll over a person?"

"No," cried young Bartlett indignantly. "This is no circus. Why, a baby could ride this horse."

"Well, that's about the style of horse I prefer. You see, I'm a trifle out of practice. I never rode anything more spirited than a street car, and I haven't been on one of them for a week."

"Oh, you can ride all right. I guess you could do most things you set your mind to."

Yates was flattered by this evidently sincere tribute to his capacity, so he got out of the hammock. The boy, who had been sitting on the horse with both feet on one side, now straightened his back and slipped to the ground.

"Wait till I throw down the fence," he said.

Yates mounted with some difficulty, and the two went trotting down the road. He managed to hold his place with some little uncertainty, but the joggling up and down worried him. He never seemed to alight in quite the same place on the horse's back, and this gave an element of chance to his position which embarrassed him. He expected to come down some time and find the horse wasn't there. The boy laughed at his riding, but Yates was too much engaged in keeping his position to mind that very much.

"D-d-dirt is s-s-said to b-b-be matter out of place, and that's what's the m-m-mat-matter w-w-with me." His conversation seemed to be shaken out of him by the trotting of the horse. "I say, Bartlett, I can't stand this any longer. I'd rather walk."

"You're all right," said the boy; "we'll make him canter."

He struck the horse over the flank with the loose end of the halter-rein.

"Here," shouted Yates, letting go the bridle and grasping the mane. "Don't make him go faster, you young fiend. I'll murder you when I get off—and that will be soon."

"You're all right," repeated young Bartlett, and much to his astonishment, Yates found it to be so. When the horse broke into a canter, Yates thought the motion as easy as swinging in a hammock, and as soothing as a rocking-chair.

"This is an improvement. But we've got to keep it up, for if this brute suddenly changes to a trot, I'm done for."

"We'll keep it up until we come in sight of the Corners, then we'll slow down to a walk. There's sure to be a lot of fellows at the blacksmith's shop, so we'll come in on them easy like."

"You're a good fellow, Bartlett," said Yates. "I suspected you of tricks at first. I'm afraid, if I had got another chap in such a fix, I wouldn't have let him off as easily as you have me. The temptation would have been too great."

When they reached the blacksmith's shop at the Corners, they found four horses in the building, ahead of them. Bartlett tied his team outside, and then, with his comrade, entered the wide doorway

of the smithy. The shop was built of rough boards, and the inside was blackened with soot. It was not well lighted, the two windows being obscured with much smoke, so that they were useless as far as their original purpose was concerned; but the doorway, as wide as that of a barn, allowed all the light to come in that the smith needed for his work. At the far end and darkest corner of the place, stood the forge with the large bellows behind it, concealed, for the most part, by the chimney. The forge was perhaps six feet square and three or four feet high, built of plank and filled in with earth. The top was covered with cinders and coal, while in the centre glowed the red core of the fire, with blue flames hovering over it. The man who worked the bellows chewed tobacco, and now and then projected the juice with deadly accuracy right into the centre of the fire, where it made a momentary hiss and dark spot. All the frequenters of the smithy admired Sandy's skill in expectoration, and many tried in vain to emulate it. The envious said it was due to the peculiar formation of his front teeth, the upper row being prominent, and the two middle teeth set far apart, as if one were missing. But this was jealousy; Sandy's perfection in the art was due to no favouritism of nature, but to constant and long-continued practice. Occasionally, with his callous right hand, never removing his left from the

lever, Sandy pulled an iron bar out of the fire and examined it critically. The incandescent end of the bar radiated a blinding white light when it was gently withdrawn, and illuminated the man's head, making his beardless face look, against its dark background, like the smudged countenance of some cynical demon glowing with a fire from within. The end of the bar, which he held, must have been very hot to an ordinary mortal, as everyone in the shop knew; all of them, at their initiation to the country club, having been handed a black piece of iron from Sandy's hand, which he held unflinchingly, but which the innocent receiver usually dropped with a yell. This was Sandy's favourite joke, and made life worth living for him. It was perhaps not so good as the blacksmith's own bit of humour, but public opinion was divided on that point. Every great man has his own particular set of admirers; and there were some who said—under their breaths of course—that Sandy could turn a horseshoe as well as Macdonald himself. Experts, however, while admitting Sandy's general genius, did not go so far as this.

About half a dozen members of the club were present, and most of them stood leaning against something with hands deep in their trousers-pockets; one was sitting on the blacksmith's bench, with his legs dangling down. On the bench, tools were scattered around so thickly that he had had to

clear a place before he could sit down; the taking of this liberty proved the man to be an old and privileged member. He sat there whittling a stick, aimlessly bringing it to a fine point, examining it frequently with a critical air, as if he were engaged in some delicate operation which required great discrimination.

The blacksmith himself stooped, with his back to one of the horses; the hind hoof of the animal, between his knees, resting on his leathern apron. The horse was restive, looking over its shoulder at him, not liking what was going on. Macdonald swore at it fluently, and requested it to stand still, holding the foot as firmly as if it were in his own iron vice, which was fixed to the table near the whittler. With his right hand he held a hot horseshoe, attached to an iron punch that had been driven into one of the nail holes, and this he pressed against the upraised hoof, as though sealing a document with a gigantic seal. Smoke and flame arose from the contact of the hot iron with the hoof, and the air was filled with the not unpleasant odour of burning horn. The smith's tool-box, with hammer, pinchers, and nails, lay on the earthen floor within easy reach. The sweat poured from his grimy brow; for it was a hot job, and Macdonald was in the habit of making the most of his work. He was called the hardest-working man in that part of the country,

and he was proud of the designation. He was a standing reproach to the loafers who frequented his shop, and that fact gave him pleasure in their company. Besides, a man must have an audience when he is an expert in swearing. Macdonald's profanity was largely automatic,—a natural gift as it were,—and he meant nothing wrong by it. In fact, when you got him fighting angry, he always forgot to swear; but in his calm moments, oaths rolled easily and picturesquely from his lips, and gave fluency to his conversation. Macdonald enjoyed the reputation round about of being a wicked man, which he was not; his language was against him, that was all. This reputation had a misty halo thrown around it by Macdonald's unknown doings "down East," from which mystical region he had come. No one knew just what Macdonald had done, but it was admitted on all sides that he must have had some terrible experiences, although he was still a young man and unmarried. He used to say, "When you have come through what I have, you won't be so ready to pick a quarrel with a man."

This must have meant something significant, but the blacksmith never took anyone into his confidence; and "down East" is a vague place, a sort of indefinite, unlocalised no-man's-land, situated anywhere between Toronto and Quebec. Almost anything might have happened in such a space of

country. Macdonald's favourite way of crushing an opponent was to say, "When you've had some of my experiences, young man, you'll know better'n to talk like that." All this gave a certain fascination to friendship with the blacksmith; and the farmers' boys felt that they were playing with fire when in his company; getting, as it were, a glimpse of the dangerous side of life. As for work, the blacksmith revelled in it, and made it practically his only vice. He did everything with full steam on, and was, as has been said, a constant reproach to loafers all over the country. When there was no work to do, he made work. When there was work to do, he did it with a rush, sweeping the sweat from his grimy brow with his hooked forefinger, and flecking it to the floor with a flirt of the right hand, loose on the wrist, in a way that made his thumb and forefinger snap together like the crack of a whip. This action was always accompanied with a long-drawn breath, almost a sigh, that seemed to say, "I wish I had the easy times you fellows have." In fact, since he came to the neighbourhood, the current phrase "He works like a steer" had given way to "He works like Macdonald," except with the older people, who find it hard to change phrases. Yet everyone liked the blacksmith, and took no special offence at his untiring industry, looking at it rather as an example to others.

He did not look up as the two new-comers

entered, but industriously pared down the hoof with a curiously-formed knife turned like a hook at the point, burnt in the shoe to its place, nailed it on, and rasped the hoof into shape with a long, broad file. Not till he let the foot drop on the earthen floor, and slapped the impatient horse on the flank, did he deign to answer young Bartlett's inquiry.

"No," he said, wringing the perspiration from his forehead, "all these horses ain't ahead of you, and you won't need to come next week. That's the last hoof of the last horse. No man needs to come to my shop and go away again, while the breath of life is left in me. And I don't do it, either, by sitting on a bench and whittling a stick."

"That's so. That's so," said Sandy, chuckling in the admiring tone of one who intimated that when the boss spoke, wisdom was uttered. "That's one on you, Sam."

"I guess I can stand it, if he can," said the whittler from the bench; which was considered fair repartee.

"Sit it, you mean," said young Bartlett, laughing with the others at his own joke.

"But," said the blacksmith severely, "we're out of shoes, and you'll have to wait till we turn some, that is, if you don't want the old ones re-set. Are they good enough?"

"I guess so, if you can find 'em; but they're out in the fields. Didn't think I'd bring the horses in while they held on, did you?" Then suddenly remembering his duties, he said by way of general introduction—

"Gentlemen, this is my friend, Mr. Yates, from New York."

The name seemed to fall like a wet blanket on the high spirits of the crowd. They had imagined from the cut of his clothes, that he was a store-keeper from some village around, or an auctioneer from a distance; these two occupations being the highest social position to which a man might attain. They were prepared to hear that he was from Welland, or perhaps St. Catherines; but New York! that was a crusher. Macdonald, however, was not a man to be put down in his own shop and before his own admirers. He was not going to let his prestige slip from him, merely because a man from New York had happened along. He could not claim to know the city, for the stranger would quickly detect the imposture, and probably expose him; but the slightly superior air which Yates wore, irritated him, while it abashed the others. Even Sandy was silent.

"I've met some people from New York, down East," he said in an off-hand manner, as if, after all, a man might meet a New-Yorker and still not sink into the ground.

"Really?" said Yates. "I hope you liked them."

"Oh, so-so," replied the blacksmith airily. "There's good and bad among them, like the rest of us."

"Ah, you noticed that," said Yates. "Well, I've often thought the same myself. It's a safe remark to make; there is generally no disputing it."

The condescending air of the New-Yorker was maddening, and Macdonald realised that he was losing ground. The quiet insolence of Yates's tone was so exasperating to the blacksmith, that he felt any language at his disposal inadequate to cope with it. The time for the practical joke had arrived. The conceit of this man must be taken down. He would try Sandy's method, and if that failed, it would at least draw attention from himself to his helper.

"Being as you're from New York, maybe you can decide a little bet Sandy here wants to have with somebody."

Sandy, quick to take the hint, picked up the bar that always lay near enough the fire to be uncomfortably warm.

"How much do you reckon that weighs?" he said, with critical nicety, estimating its ounces in his swaying hand. Sandy had never done it better. There was a look of perfect innocence on his bland, unsophisticated countenance, and the crowd looked on in breathless suspense.

Bartlett was about to step forward and save his friend, but a wicked glare from Macdonald restrained him; besides, he felt somehow that his sympathies were with his neighbours, and not with the stranger he had brought among them. He thought resentfully that Yates might have been less high and mighty. In fact, when he asked him to come, he had imagined his brilliancy would be instantly popular, and would reflect glory on himself. Now he fancied he was included in the general scorn Yates took such little pains to conceal.

Yates glanced at the piece of iron, and, without taking his hands from his pockets, said carelessly—

"Oh, I should imagine it weighed a couple of pounds."

"Heft it," said Sandy beseechingly, holding it out to him.

"No, thank you," replied Yates, with a smile. "Do you think I have never picked up a hot horseshoe before? If you are anxious to know its weight, why don't you take it over to the grocery store and have it weighed?"

"'Tain't hot," said Sandy, as he feebly smiled and flung the iron back on the forge. "If it was, I couldn't have held it s'long."

"Oh no," returned Yates, with a grin, "of course not. I don't know what a blacksmith's hands are, do I? Try something fresh."

Macdonald saw there was no triumph over him among his crowd, for they all evidently felt as much involved in the failure of Sandy's trick as he did himself; but he was sure that in future some man, hard pushed in argument, would fling the New-Yorker at him. In the crisis, he showed the instinct of a Napoleon.

"Well, boys," he cried, "fun's fun, but I've got to work. I have to earn *my* living, anyhow."

Yates enjoyed his victory; they wouldn't try "getting at" him again, he said to himself.

Macdonald strode to the forge and took out the bar of white-hot iron. He gave a scarcely perceptible nod to Sandy, who, ever ready with tobacco juice, spat with great directness on the top of the anvil. Macdonald placed the hot iron on the spot, and quickly smote it a stalwart blow with the heavy hammer. The result was appalling. An instantaneous spreading fan of apparently molten iron lit up the place, as if it were a flash of lightning. There was a crash like the bursting of a cannon. The shop was filled for a moment with a shower of brilliant sparks, that flew like meteors to every corner of the place. Everyone was prepared for the explosion except Yates. He sprang back with a cry, tripped, and, without having time to get the use of his hands to ease his fall, tumbled and rolled to the horses' heels. The animals, frightened by the report, stamped around; and

Yates had to hustle on his hands and knees to safer quarters, exhibiting more celerity than dignity. The blacksmith never smiled, but everyone else roared. The reputation of the country was safe. Sandy doubled himself up in his boisterous mirth.

"There's no one like the old man!" he shouted. "Oh, lordy! lordy! He's all wool, and a yard wide."

Yates picked himself up, and dusted himself off, laughing with the rest of them.

"If I ever knew that trick before, I had forgotten it. That's one on me, as this youth in spasms said a moment ago. Blacksmith, shake! I'll treat the crowd, if there's a place handy."

CHAPTER XI

PEOPLE who have but a superficial knowledge of the life and times here set down, may possibly claim that the grocery store, and not the blacksmith shop, used to be the real country club, —the place where the politics of the country were discussed; where the doings of great men were commended or condemned, and the Government criticised. It is true, that the grocery store was the club of the village, when a place like the Corners grew to be a village; but the blacksmith shop was usually the first building erected on the spot where a village was ultimately to stand. It was the nucleus. As a place grew, and enervating luxury set in, the grocery store slowly supplanted the blacksmith's shop, because people found a nail keg, or a box of crackers, more comfortable to sit on than the limited seats at their disposal in a smithy; moreover, in winter the store, with its red-hot box-stove, was a place of warmth and joy, but the revelling in such an atmosphere of comfort meant that the members of the club had to live close at hand, for no man would brave the storms of a

Canadian winter night, and journey a mile or two through the snow, to enjoy even the pleasures of the store. So the grocery was essentially a village club, and not a rural club.

Of course, as civilisation advanced, the blacksmith found it impossible to compete with the grocer. He could not offer the same inducements. The grocery approached, more nearly than the smithy, the grateful epicurism of the Athenæum, the Reform, or the Carlton. It catered to the appetite of man, besides supplying him with the intellectual stimulus of debate. A box of soda crackers was generally open, and although such biscuits were always dry, they were good to munch, if consumed slowly. The barrel of hazel-nuts never had a lid on. The raisins, in their square box, with blue-tinted paper, setting forth the word "Malaga" under the coloured picture of joyous Spanish grape-pickers, stood on the shelves behind the counter, at an angle suited to display the contents to all comers, requiring an exceptionally long reach, and more than an ordinary amount of cheek, before they were got at; but the barrel of Muscavado brown sugar was where everyone could dip his hand in; while the man on the keg of tenpenny nails might extend his arm over into the display window, where the highly-coloured candies exhibited themselves, although the person who meddled often with them was frowned upon,

for it was etiquette in the club not to purloin things which were expensive. The grocer himself drew the line at the candies, and a second helping usually brought forth the mild reproof—

"Shall I charge that, Sam; or would you rather pay for it now?"

All these delicacies were taken in a somewhat surreptitious way, and the takers generally wore an absent-minded look, as if the purloining was not quite intentional on their part. But they were all good customers of the grocer, and the abstractions were doubtless looked on by him as being in the way of trade; just as the giving of a present with a pound of tea, or a watch with a suit of clothes, became in later days. Be that as it may, he never said anything unless his generosity was taken advantage of, which was rarely the case.

Very often on winter nights there was a hilarious feast, that helped to lighten the shelves and burden the till. This ordinarily took the form of a splurge in cove oysters. Cove oysters came from Baltimore, of course, in round tins; they were introduced into Canada long before the square tin boxes that now come in winter from the same bi-valvular city. Cove oysters were partly cooked before being tinned, so that they would, as the advertisements say, keep in any climate. They did not require ice around them, as do the square tins which now contain the raw oysters. Someone present would say—

"What's the matter with having a feed of cove oysters?"

He then collected a subscription of ten cents or so from each member, and the whole was expended in several cans of oysters and a few pounds of crackers. The cooking was done in a tin basin, on the top of the hot stove. The contents of the cans were emptied into this handy dish, milk was added, and broken crackers, to give thickness and consistency to the result. There were always plenty of plates, for the store supplied the crockery of the neighbourhood. There were also plenty of spoons, for everything was to be had at the grocery. What more could the most exacting man need? On a particularly reckless night, the feast ended with several tins of peaches, which needed no cooking, but only a sprinkling of sugar. The grocer was always an expert at cooking cove oysters and at opening tins of peaches.

There was a general feeling among the members that, by indulging in these banquets, they were going the pace rather; and some of the older heads feebly protested against the indulgence of the times, but it was noticed that they never refrained from doing their share when it came to spoon work.

"A man has but one life to live," the younger and more reckless would say, as if that excused the extravagance; for a member rarely got away

without being fifteen cents out of pocket, especially when they had peaches as well as oysters.

The grocery at the Corners had been but recently established, and as yet the blacksmith's shop had not looked upon it as a rival. Macdonald was monarch of all he surveyed, and his shop was the favourite gathering-place for miles around. The smithy was also the patriotic centre of the district, as a blacksmith's shop must be as long as anvils can take the place of cannon for saluting purposes. On the 24th of May, the Queen's birthday, celebrated locally as the only day in the year, except Sundays, when Macdonald's face was clean and when he did no work, the firing of the anvils aroused the echoes of the locality. On that great day, the grocer supplied the powder, which was worth three York shillings a pound—a York shilling being sixpence halfpenny. It took two men to carry an anvil, with a good deal of grunting; but Macdonald, if the crowd were big enough, made nothing of picking it up, hoisting it on his shoulder, and flinging it down on the green in front of his shop. In the iron mass there is a square hole, and when the anvil was placed upside down the hole was uppermost. It was filled with powder, and a wooden plug, with a notch cut in it, was pounded in with a sledge-hammer. Powder was sprinkled from the notch over the surface of the anvil, and then the crowd stood back and held

its breath. It was a most exciting moment. Macdonald would come running out of the shop bare-headed, holding a long iron bar, the wavering, red-hot end of which descended on the anvil, while the blacksmith shouted in a terrifying voice, "Look out, there!" The loose powder hissed and spat for a moment, then bang went the cannon, and a great cloud of smoke rolled upwards, while the rousing cheers came echoing back from the surrounding forests. The helper, with the powder-horn, would spring to the anvil and pour the black explosive into the hole, while another stood ready with plug and hammer. The delicious scent of burnt gunpowder filled the air, and was inhaled by all the youngsters with satisfaction, for now they realised what real war was. Thus the salutes were fired, and thus the Royal birthday was fittingly celebrated.

Where two anvils were to be had, the cannonade was much brisker, as then a plug was not needed. The hole in the lower anvil was filled with powder, and the other anvil was placed over it. This was much quicker than pounding in a plug, and had quite as striking and detonating effect. The upper anvil gave a heave, like Mark Twain's shot-laden frog, and fell over on its side. The smoke rolled up as usual, and the report was equally gratifying.

Yates learned all these things as he sat in the

blacksmith's shop, for they were still in the month of May, and the smoke of the echoing anvils had hardly yet cleared away. All present were eager to tell him of the glory of the day. One or two were good enough to express regret that he had not been there to see. After the disaster which had overturned Yates, things had gone on very smoothly, and he had became one of the crowd, as it were. The fact that he was originally a Canadian, told in his favour, although he had been contaminated by long residence in the States.

Macdonald worked hard at the turning of horse-shoes from long rods of iron. Usually an extended line of unfinished shoes bestrode a blackened scantling, like bodiless horsemen; the scantling crossing the shop overhead, just under the roof. These were the work of Macdonald's comparatively leisure days, and they were ready to be fitted to the hoofs of any horse that came to be shod, but on this occasion there had been such a run on his stock that it was exhausted; a depletion the smith seemed to regard as a reproach on himself, for he told Yates several times that he often had as many as three dozen shoes up aloft for a rainy day.

When the sledge-hammer work was to be done, one of those present stepped forward and swung the heavy sledge, keeping stroke for stroke with Macdonald's one-handed hammer, all of which

required a nice ear for time. This assistance was supposed to be rendered by Sandy; but, as he remarked, he was no hog, and anyone who wished to show his skill was at liberty to do so. Sandy seemed to spend most of his time at the bellows, and when he was not echoing the sentiments of the boss, as he called him, he was commending the expertness of the *pro tem.* amateur, the wielder of the sledge. It was fun to the amateur, and it was an old thing with Sandy, so he never protested against this interference with his duty, believing in giving everyone a chance, especially when it came to swinging a heavy hammer. The whole scene brought back to Yates the days of his youth, especially when Macdonald, putting the finishing strokes to his shoe, let his hammer periodically tinkle with musical clangour on the anvil, ringing forth a tintinabulation that chimed melodiously on the ear—a sort of anvil-chorus accompaniment to his mechanical skill. He was a real sleight-of-hand man, and the anvil was his orchestra.

Yates soon began to enjoy his visit to the rural club. As the members thawed out, he found them all first-rate fellows, and what was more, they were appreciative listeners. His stories were all evidently new to them, and nothing puts a man into a genial frame of mind so quickly as an attentive, sympathetic audience. Few men could tell a story better than Yates, but he needed the responsive

touch of interested hearers. He hated to have to explain the points of his anecdotes, as indeed, what story-teller does not? A cold and critical man like the professor froze the spring of narration at its source. Besides, Renmark had an objectionable habit of tracing the recital to its origin; it annoyed Yates to tell a modern yarn, and then discover that Aristophanes, or some other prehistoric poacher on the good things men were to say, had forestalled him by a thousand years or so. When a man is quick to see the point of your stories, and laughs heartily at them, you are apt to form a high opinion of his good sense, and to value his companionship.

When the horses were shod, and young Bartlett, who was delighted at the impression Yates had made, was preparing to go, the whole company protested against the New-Yorker's departure. This was real flattery.

"What's your hurry, Bartlett?" asked the whittler; "you can't do anything this afternoon, if you do go home. It's a poor time this to mend a bad day's work. If you stay, he'll stay; won't you, Mr. Yates? Macdonald is going to set tyres, and he needs us all to look on and see that he does it right; don't you, Mac?"

"Yes; I get a lot of help from you while there's a stick to whittle," replied the smith.

"Then there's the protracted meeting to-night

at the schoolhouse," put in another, anxious that all the attractions of the place should be brought forward.

"That's so," said the whittler; "I had forgotten about that. It's the first night, so we must all be there to encourage old Benderson. You'll be on hand to-night; won't you, Macdonald?"

The blacksmith made no answer, but turned to Sandy and asked him savagely what in — and —nation he was standing gawking there for? Why didn't he go outside and get things ready for the tyre setting? What in thunder was he paying him for, anyhow? Wasn't there enough loafers round, without him joining the ranks?

Sandy took this rating with equanimity, and when the smith's back was turned, he shrugged his shoulders, took a fresh bite of tobacco from the plug which he drew from his hip-pocket, winking at the others as he did so. He leisurely followed Macdonald out of the shop, saying in a whisper, as he passed the whittler,—

"I wouldn't rile the old man, if I were you."

The club then adjourned to the outside, all except those who sat on the bench. Yates asked—

"What's the matter with Macdonald? Doesn't he like protracted meetings? And, by the way, what are protracted meetings?"

"They're revival meetings,—religious meetings, you know, for converting sinners."

"Really?" said Yates. "But why protracted? Are they kept on for a week or two?"

"Yes; I suppose that's why, although, to tell the truth, I never knew the reason for the name. Protracted meetings always stood for just the same thing ever since I was a boy, and we took it as meaning that one thing, without thinking why."

"And doesn't Macdonald like them?"

"Well, you see, it's like this. He never wants to go to a protracted meeting, yet he can't keep away. He's like a drunkard and the corner tavern. He can't pass it, and he knows if he goes in he will fall. Macdonald's always the first one to go up to the penitent bench. They rake him in every time. He has religion real bad for a couple of weeks, and then he backslides. He doesn't seem able to stand either the converting or the backsliding. I suppose, some time they will gather him in finally, and he will stick and become a class leader, but he hasn't stuck, up to date."

"Then, he doesn't like to hear the subject spoken of?"

"You bet he don't. It isn't safe to twit him about it either. To tell the truth, I was pleased when I heard him swear at Sandy; then I knew it was all right, and Sandy can stand it. Macdonald is a bad man to tackle when he's mad. There's nobody in this district can handle him. I'd sooner get a blow from a sledge-hammer than meet Mac's

fist when his dander is up. But so long as he swears, it's all right. Say, you'll stay down for the meeting, won't you?"

"I think I will. I'll see what young Bartlett intends to do. It isn't very far to walk, in any case."

"There will be lots of nice girls going your way to-night after the meeting. I don't know but I'll jog along in that direction myself when it's over. That's the principal use I have for the meetings, anyhow."

The whittler and Yates got down from the bench, and joined the crowd outside. Young Bartlett sat on one of the horses, loth to leave while the tyre setting was going on.

"Are you coming, Yates?" he shouted, as his comrade appeared.

"I think I'll stay for the meeting," said Yates, approaching him, and patting the horse. He had no desire for mounting and riding away in the presence of that critical assemblage.

"All right," said young Bartlett. "I guess I'll be down at the meeting too; then, I can show you the way home."

"Thanks," said Yates; "I'll be on the lookout for you."

Young Bartlett galloped away, and was soon lost to sight in a cloud of dust. The others had also departed with their shod horses; but there were

several new arrivals, and the company was augmented rather than diminished. They sat around on the fence, or on the logs dumped down by the wayside.

Few smoked, but many chewed tobacco. It was a convenient way of using the weed, and required no matches, besides being safer for men who had to frequent inflammable barns.

A circular fire burned in front of the shop, oak bark being the main fuel used. Iron waggon-tyres lay hidden in this burning circle. Macdonald and Sandy bustled about making preparations; their faces, more hideous in the bright sunlight than in the comparative obscurity of the shop, giving them the appearance of two evil spirits about to attend some incantation scene of which the circular fire was the visible indication. Cross-trees, of four pieces of squared timber, lay near the fire, with a tyreless wheel placed flat upon them, the hub in the square hole at the centre. Shiftless farmers always resisted having tyres set, until they would no longer stay on the wheel. The inevitable day was postponed, time and again, by a soaking of the wheels over night in some convenient puddle of water; but as the warmer and drier weather approached, this device, supplemented by wooden wedges, no longer sufficed, and the tyres had to be set for summer work. Frequently the tyre rolled off on the sandy highway, and the farmer was

reluctantly compelled to borrow a rail from the nearest fence, and place it so as to support the axle; he then put the denuded wheel and its tyre on the waggon, and drove slowly to the nearest blacksmith's shop, his vehicle "trailing like a wounded duck," the rail leaving a snake's track behind it on the dusty road.

The blacksmith had previously cut and welded the tyre, reducing its circumference, and when it was hot enough, he and Sandy, each with a pair of tongs, lifted it from the red-hot circle of fire. It was pressed and hammered down on the blazing rim of the wheel, and instantly Sandy and Macdonald, with two pails of water that stood handy, poured the cold liquid around the red-hot zone, enveloping themselves in clouds of steam, the quick contraction clamping the iron on the wood until the joints cracked together. There could be no loitering; quick work was necessary, or a spoiled wheel was the result. Macdonald, alternately spluttering through fire and steam, was in his element. Even Sandy had to be on the keen jump, without a moment to call his plug of tobacco his own. Macdonald fussed and fussed, but got through an immense amount of work in an incredibly short space of time, cursing Sandy pretty much all the while; yet that useful man never replied in kind, contenting himself with a wink at the crowd when he got the chance, and saying under his breath—

"The old man's in great fettle to-day."

Thus everybody enjoyed himself: Macdonald, because he was the centre figure in a saturnalia of work; Sandy, because no matter how hard a man has to work, he can chew tobacco all the time; the crowd, because the spectacle of fire, water, and steam was fine, and they didn't have to do anything but sit around and look on. The sun got lower, and lower, as, one by one, the spectators departed to do their chores, and prepare for the evening meeting. Yates, at the invitation of the whittler, went home with him, and thoroughly relished his evening meal.

CHAPTER XII

MARGARET had never met any man but her father who was so fond of books as Professor Renmark. The young fellows of her acquaintance read scarcely anything but the weekly papers; they went with some care through the yellow almanac that was given away free, with the grocer's name printed on the back. The marvellous cures the almanac recorded were of little interest, and were chiefly read by the older folk, but the young men revelled in the jokes to be found at the bottom of every page; their only drawback being, that one could never tell the stories at a paring-bee or other social gathering, because everyone in the company had read them. A few of the young men came sheepishly round to get a book out of the library, but it was evident that their interest was not so much in the volume as in the librarian, and when that fact became apparent to the girl, she resented it. Margaret was thought to be cold and proud by the youth of the neighbourhood, or "stuck-up," as they expressed it.

To such a girl, a man like Renmark was a

revelation. He could talk of other things than the weather, live stock, and the prospects for the crops. The conversation at first did not include Margaret, but she listened to every word of it with interest. Her father and mother were anxious to hear about their boy; and from that engrossing subject, the talk soon drifted to university life, and the differences between city and country. At last the farmer, with a sigh, arose to go. There is little time for pleasant talk on a farm while daylight lasts. Margaret, remembering her duties as librarian, began to take in the books from the waggon to the front room. Renmark, slow in most things, was quick enough to offer his assistance on this occasion; but he reddened somewhat as he did so, for he was unused to being a squire of dames.

"I wish you would let me do the porterage," he said. "I would like to earn the right to look at these books sometimes, even though I may not have the privilege of borrowing, not being a taxable resident of the township."

"The librarian," answered Margaret, with a smile, "seems to be at liberty to use her own discretion in the matter of lending. No one has authority to look over her accounts, or to censure her if she lends recklessly. So, if you wish to borrow books, all you have to do is to ask for them."

"You may be sure, I shall avail myself of the

permission. But my conscience will be easier if I am allowed to carry them in."

"You will be permitted to help. I like carrying them. There is no more delicious armful than books."

As Renmark looked at the lovely girl, her face radiant with enthusiasm, the disconcerting thought came suddenly, that perhaps her statement might not be accurate. No such thought had ever suggested itself to him before, and it now filled him with guilty confusion. He met the clear, honest gaze of her eyes for a moment, then he stammered lamely—

"I—I too am very fond of books."

Together they carried in the several hundred volumes, and then began to arrange them.

"Have you no catalogue?" he asked.

"No. We never seem to need one. People come and look over the library, and take out whatever book they fancy."

"Yes, but still every library ought to be catalogued. Cataloguing is an art in itself. I have paid a good deal of attention to it, and will show you how it is done, if you care to know."

"Oh, I wish you would."

"How do you keep a record of the volumes that are out?"

"I just write the name of the person, the title, and the date in this blank book. When the volume is returned, I score out the record."

"I see," said Renmark dubiously.

"That isn't right, is it? Is there a better way?"

"Well, for a small library that ought to do; but if you were handling many books, I think confusion might result."

"Do tell me the right way. I should like to know, even if it is a small library."

"There are several methods, but I am by no means sure your way is not the simplest, and therefore the best in this instance."

"I'm not going to be put off like that," said Margaret, laughing. "A collection of books is a collection of books, whether large or small, and deserves respect and the best of treatment. Now, what method is used in large libraries?"

"Well, I should suggest a system of cards, though slips of paper would do. When any person wants to take out a book, let him make out a card, giving the date and the name or number of the book: he then must sign the card, and there you are. He cannot deny having had the book, for you have his own signature to prove it. The slips are arranged in a box according to dates, and when a book is returned, you tear up the recording paper."

"I think that is a very good way, and I will adopt it."

"Then, let me send to Toronto and get you a few hundred cards. We'll have them here in a day or two."

"Oh, I don't want to put you to that trouble."

"It is no trouble at all. Now, that is settled, let us attack the catalogue. Have you a blank book anywhere about? We will first make an alphabetical list, then we will arrange them under the heads of history, biography, fiction, and so on."

Simple as it appeared, the making of a catalogue took a long time. Both were absorbed in their occupation. Cataloguing in itself is a straight and narrow path, but in this instance there were so many delightful side excursions, that rapid progress could not be expected. To a reader, the mere mention of a book brings up recollections. Margaret was reading out the names; Renmark, on slips of paper, each with a letter on it, was writing them down.

"Oh, have you that book?" he would say, looking up as a title was mentioned. "Have you ever read it?"

"No; for, you see, this part of the library is all new to me. Why, here is one of which the leaves are not even cut. No one has read it. Is it good?"

"One of the best," Renmark would say, taking the volume. "Yes, I know this edition. Let me read you one passage."

And Margaret would sit in the rocking-chair, while he cut the leaves and found the place. One extract was sure to suggest another, and time passed before the title of the book found its way to the proper slip of paper. These excursions into litera-

ture were most interesting to both excursionists, but they interfered with cataloguing. Renmark read and read, ever and anon stopping to explain some point, or quote what someone else had said on the same subject, marking the place in the book, as he paused, with inserted forefinger. Margaret swayed back and forth in the comfortable rocking-chair, and listened intently, her large dark eyes fixed upon him so earnestly that now and then, when he met them, he seemed disconcerted for a moment. But the girl did not notice this. At the end of one of his dissertations, she leaned her elbow on the arm of the chair, with her cheek resting against her hand, and said—

"How very clear you make everything, Mr. Renmark."

"Do you think so?" he said, with a smile. "It's my business, you know."

"I think it's a shame that girls are not allowed to go to the university; don't you?"

"Really, I never gave any thought to the subject, and I am not quite prepared to say."

"Well, I think it most unfair. The university is supported by the Government, is it not? Then, why should half of the population be shut out from its advantages?"

"I'm afraid it wouldn't do, you know."

"Why?"

"There are many reasons," he replied evasively,

"What are they? Do you think girls could not learn, or are not as capable of hard study as well as"—

"It isn't that," he interrupted; "there are plenty of girls' schools in the country, you know. Some very good ones in Toronto itself, for that matter."

"Yes; but why shouldn't I go to the university with my brother? There are plenty of boys' schools too, but the university is the university. I suppose my father helps to support it. Why, then, should one child be allowed to attend and the other not? It isn't at all just."

"It wouldn't do," said the professor more firmly, the more he thought about it.

"Would you take that as a satisfying reason from one of your students?"

"What?"

"The phrase, 'It wouldn't do.'"

Renmark laughed.

"I'm afraid not," he said; "but, then, I'm very exacting in class. Now, if you want to know, why do you not ask your father?"

"Father and I have discussed the question often, and he quite agrees with me in thinking it unfair."

"Oh, does he?" said Renmark, taken aback; although, when he reflected, he realised that the father doubtless knew as little about the dangers of the city as the daughter did.

"And what does your mother say?"

"Oh, mother thinks if a girl is a good housekeeper, it is all that is required. So you will have to give me a good reason, if there is one, for nobody else in this house argues on your side of the question."

"Well," said Renmark in an embarrassed manner, "if you don't know by the time you are twenty-five, I'll promise to discuss the whole subject with you."

Margaret sighed as she leaned back in her chair.

"Twenty-five?" she cried, adding, with the unconscious veracity of youth, "That will be seven years to wait. Thank you, but I think I'll find out before that time."

"I think you will," Renmark answered.

They were interrupted by the sudden and unannounced entrance of her brother.

"Hello, you two!" he shouted, with the rude familiarity of a boy. "It seems the library takes a longer time to arrange than usual."

Margaret rose with dignity.

"We are cataloguing," she said severely.

"Oh, that's what you call it, is it? Can I be of any assistance, or is two company when they're cataloguing? Have you any idea what time it is?"

"I'm afraid I must be off," said the professor, rising. "My companion in camp won't know what has become of me."

"Oh, he's all right!" said Henry. "He's down at the Corners, and is going to stay there for the meeting to-night. Young Bartlett passed a while ago;

he was getting the horses shod, and your friend went with him. I guess, Yates can take care of himself, Mr. Renmark. Say, sis, will you go to the meeting? I'm going. Young Bartlett's going, and so is Kitty. Won't you come too, Mr. Renmark? It's great fun."

"Don't talk like that about a religious gathering, Henry," said his sister, frowning.

"Well, that's what it is, anyhow."

"Is it a prayer meeting?" asked the professor, looking at the girl.

"You bet it is!" cried Henry enthusiastically, giving no one a chance to speak but himself. "It's a prayer meeting, and every other kind of meeting all rolled into one. It's a revival meeting; a protracted meeting, that's what it is. You had better come with us, Mr. Renmark, and then you can see what it is like. You can walk home with Yates."

This attractive denouement did not seem to appeal so strongly to the professor as the boy expected, for he made no answer.

"You will come, sis; won't you?" urged the boy.

"Are you sure Kitty is going?"

"Of course she is. You don't think she'd miss it, do you? They'll soon be here, too; better go and get ready."

"I'll see what mother says," replied Margaret, as she left the room. She shortly returned, dressed ready for the meeting, and the professor concluded he would go also.

CHAPTER XIII

ANYONE passing the Corners that evening would have quickly seen that something important was on. Vehicles of all kinds lined the roadway, drawn in towards the fence, to the rails of which the horses were tied. Some had evidently come from afar, for the fame of the revivalist was widespread. The women, when they arrived, entered the schoolhouse, which was brilliantly lighted with oil lamps. The men stood around outside in groups, while many sat in rows on the fences, all conversing about every conceivable topic except religion. They apparently acted on the theory, that there would be enough religion to satisfy the most exacting when they went inside. Yates sat on the top rail of the fence with the whittler, whose guest he had been. It was getting too dark for satisfactory whittling, so the man with the jack-knife improved the time by cutting notches in the rail on which he sat. Even when this failed, there was always a satisfaction in opening and shutting a knife that had a powerful spring at the back of it, added to which was the pleasurable danger of

cutting his fingers. They were discussing the Fenian question, which at that time was occupying the minds of Canadians to some extent. Yates was telling them what he knew of the brotherhood in New York, and the strength of it, which his auditors seemed inclined to under-estimate. Nobody believed that the Fenians would be so foolhardy as to attempt an invasion of Canada; but Yates held that if they did, they would give Canadians more trouble than was expected.

"Oh, we'll turn old Bartlett on them, if they come over here. They'll be glad enough to get back, if he tackles them."

"With his tongue," added another.

"By the way," said the whittler, "did young Bartlett say he was coming to-night? I hope he'll bring his sister if he does. Didn't any of you fellows ask him to bring her? He'd never think of it if he wasn't told. He has no consideration for the rest of us."

"Why didn't you ask him? I hear you have taken to going in that direction yourself."

"Who? Me?" asked the whittler, quite unconcerned. "I have no chance in that quarter, especially when the old man's around."

There was a sound of singing from the schoolhouse. The double doors were wide open, and as the light streamed out, the people began to stream in."

"Where's Macdonald?" asked Yates.

"Oh, I guess he's taken to the woods. He washes his face, and then he hides. He has the sense to wash his face first, for he knows he will have to come. You'll see him back before they start the second hymn."

"Well, boys!" said one, getting down from the fence, and stretching his arms above his head with a yawn, "I guess, if we're going in, it's about time."

One after another they got down from the fence, the whittler shutting his knife with a reluctant snap, and putting it in his pocket with evident regret. The schoolhouse, large as it was, was filled to its utmost capacity—women on one side of the room, and men on the other; although near the door there was no such division, all the occupants of the back benches being men and boys. The congregation was standing, singing a hymn, when Yates and his comrades entered, so their quiet in-coming was not noticed. The teacher's desk had been moved from the platform on which it usually stood, and now occupied a corner on the men's side of the house. It was used as a seat by two or three, who wished to be near the front, and at the same time keep an eye on the rest of the assemblage. The local preacher stood on the edge of the platform, beating time gently with his hymn-book, but not singing, as he had neither voice nor ear for music, and happily recognised the fact. The singing was led by a man in the middle of the room

At the back of the platform, near the wall, were two chairs, on one of which sat the Rev. Mr. Benderson, who was to conduct the revival. He was a stout, powerful-looking man, but Yates could not see his face, for it was buried in his hands, his head being bowed in silent prayer. It was generally understood that he had spent a youth of fearful wickedness, and he always referred to himself as a brand snatched from the burning. It was even hinted that at one time he had been a card-player, but no one knew this for a fact. Many of the local preachers had not the power of exhortation, therefore a man like the Rev. Mr. Benderson, who had that gift abnormally developed, was too valuable to be localised; so he spent the year going from place to place, sweeping, driving, coaxing, or frightening into the fold those stray sheep that hovered on the outskirts; once they were within the religious ring-fence, the local minister was supposed to keep them there. The latter, who had given out the hymn, was a man of very different calibre. He was tall, pale, and thin, and his long black coat hung on him as if it were on a post. When the hymn was finished, and everyone sat down, Yates, and those with him, found seats as best they could at the end near the door. This was the portion of the hall where the scoffers assembled, but it was also the portion which yielded most fruit, if the

revival happened to be a successful one. Yates, seeing the place so full, and noticing two empty benches up at the front, asked the whittler why they were not occupied.

"They'll be occupied pretty soon."

"Who are they being kept for?"

"Prehaps you, prehaps me, prehaps both of us. You never can tell. That's the penitents' bench."

The local preacher knelt on the platform, and offered up a prayer. He asked the Lord to bless the efforts of the brother who was with them there that night, and to crown his labours with success; through his instrumentality, to call many wandering sinners home. There were cries of "Amen" and "Bless the Lord" from different parts of the hall as the prayer was being made. On rising, another hymn was given out:

> "Joy to the world, the Lord is come.
> Let earth receive her King."

The leader of the singing started it too low. The tune began high, and ran down to the bottom of the scale by the time it reached the end of the first line. When the congregation had got two-thirds of the way down, they found they could go no farther, not even those who sang bass. The leader, in some confusion, had to pitch the tune higher, and his miscalculation was looked upon as exceedingly funny by the reckless spirits at the back of the hall. The door opened quietly, and

they all turned expecting to see Macdonald, but it was only Sandy. He had washed his face with but indifferent success, and the bulge in his cheek, like a wen, showed that he had not abandoned tobacco on entering the schoolhouse. He tip-toed to a place beside his friends.

"The old man's outside," he whispered to the youth who sat nearest him, holding his hand to the side of his mouth so that the sound would not travel. Catching sight of Yates, he winked at him in a friendly sort of way.

The hymn gathered volume and spirit as it went on, gradually recovering from the misadventure at starting. When it was finished, the preacher sat down beside the revivalist. His part of the work was done, as there was no formal introduction of speaker to audience to be gone through. The other remained as he was, with bowed head, for what appeared to be a long time.

A deep silence fell on all present. Even the whisperings among the scoffers ceased.

At last Mr. Benderson slowly raised his head, arose, and came to the front of the platform. He had a strong, masterful, clean-shaven face, with the heavy jaw of a stubborn man—a man not easily beaten. "Open the door," he said in a quiet voice.

In the last few meetings he had held, he had found this an effective beginning. It was new to his present audience. Usually a knot of people

stood outside, and if they were there, he made an appeal to them, through the open door, to enter. If no one was there, he had a lesson to impart, based on the silence and the darkness. In this instance, it was hard to say which was the more surprised, the revivalist or the congregation. Sandy, being on his feet, stepped to the door, and threw it open. He was so astonished at what he saw, that he slid behind the open door out of sight. Macdonald stood there, against the darkness beyond, in a crouching attitude, as if about to spring. He had evidently been trying to see what was going on, through the keyhole; and being taken unawares by the sudden opening of the door, had not had time to recover himself. No retreat was now possible. He stood up with haggard face, like a man who has been on a spree, and, without a word, walked in. Those on the bench in front of Yates moved together a little closer, and the blacksmith sat down on the vacant space left at the outside. In his confusion, he drew his hand across his brow, and snapped his fingers loudly in the silence. A few faces at the back wore a grin, and would have laughed had not Sandy, closing the door quietly, given them one menacing look which quelled their merriment. He was not going to have the "old man" made fun of in his extremity; and they all had respect enough for Sandy's fist, not to run the risk of

encountering it after the meeting was over. Macdonald himself was more to be dreaded in a fight; but the chances were that for the next two or three weeks, if the revival were a success, there would be no danger from that quarter. Sandy, however, was permanently among the unconverted, and therefore to be feared, as being always ready to stand up for his employer, either with voice or blow. The unexpected incident Mr. Benderson had witnessed, suggested no remarks at the time, so, being a wise man, he said nothing. The congregation wondered how he had known Macdonald was at the door, and none more than Macdonald himself. It seemed to many that the revivalist had a gift of divination denied to themselves, and this belief left them in a frame of mind more than ever ready to profit by the discourse they were about to hear.

Mr. Benderson began in a low monotone, that nevertheless penetrated to every part of the room. He had a voice of peculiar quality, as sweet as the tones of a tenor, and as pleasant to hear as music; now and then there was a manly ring in it which thrilled his listeners. "A week ago to-night," he said, "at this very hour, I stood by the deathbed of one who is now among the blest. It is four years since he found salvation, by the mercy of God, through the humble instrumentality of the least of His servants. It was my blessed

privilege to see that young man—that boy almost—pledge his soul to Jesus. He was less than twenty when he gave himself to Christ, and his hopes of a long life were as strong as the hopes of the youngest here to-night. Yet he was struck down in the early flush of manhood—struck down almost without warning. When I heard of his brief illness, although knowing nothing of its seriousness, something urged me to go to him, and at once. When I reached the house, they told me that he had asked to see me, and that they had just sent a messenger to the telegraph-office with a despatch for me. I said, 'God telegraphed to me.' They took me to the bedside of my young friend, whom I had last seen as hearty and strong as anyone here."

Mr. Benderson then, in a voice quivering with emotion, told the story of the deathbed scene. His language was simple and touching, and it was evident to the most callous auditor that he spoke from the heart, describing in pathetic words the scene he had witnessed. His unadorned eloquence went straight home to every listener, and many an eye dimmed as he put before them a graphic picture of the serenity attending the end of a well-spent life.

"As I came through among you to-night," he continued, "as you stood together in groups outside this building, I caught a chance expression that one of you uttered. A man was speaking of

some neighbour who, at this busy season of the year, had been unable to get help. I think the one to whom this man was speaking, had asked if the busy man were here, and the answer was 'No; he has not a minute to call his own.' The phrase has haunted me since I heard it, less than an hour ago. 'Not a minute to call his own!' I thought of it as I sat before you. I thought of it as I rose to address you. I think of it now. Who has a minute to call his own?" The soft tones of the preacher's voice had given place to a ringing cry, that echoed from the roof down on their heads. "Have you? Have I? Has any king, any prince, any president, any ruler over men, a minute or a moment he can call his own? Not one. Not one of all the teeming millions on this earth. The minutes that are past are yours. What use have you made of them? All your efforts, all your prayers will not change the deeds done in any one of those minutes that are past, and those only are yours. The chiselled stone is not more fixed than are the deeds of the minutes that are past. Their record is for you or against you. But where now are those minutes of the future—those minutes that, from this time onward, you will be able to call your own when they are spent? They are in the hand of God—in His hand to give or to withhold. And who can count them in the hand of God? Not you, not I, not the wisest man upon the earth. Man may

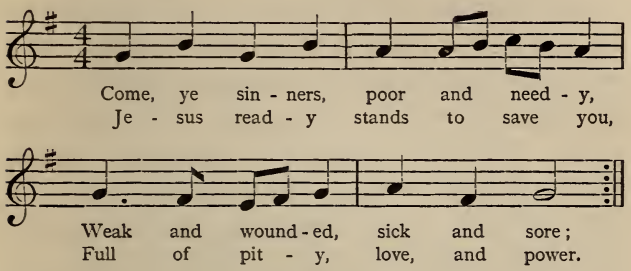
number the miles from here to the farthest visible star; but he cannot tell you—*you*; I don't mean your neighbour, I mean *you*—he cannot tell YOU whether your minutes are to be one or a thousand. They are doled out to you, and you are responsible for them. But there will come a moment—it may be to-night, it may be a year hence—when the hand of God will close, and you will have had your sum. Then time will end for you, and eternity begin. Are you prepared for that awful moment,—that moment when the last is given you, and the next withheld? What if it came now? Are you prepared for it? Are you ready to welcome it, as did our brother who died at this hour one short week ago? His was not the only deathbed I have attended. Some scenes have been so seared into my brain, that I can never forget them. A year ago I was called to the bedside of a dying man, old in years and old in sin. Often had he been called, but he put Christ away from him, saying, 'At a more convenient season.' He knew the path, but he walked not therein. And when at last God's patience ended, and this man was stricken down, he, foolish to the last, called for me the servant, instead of to God the Master. When I reached his side, the stamp of death was on his face. The biting finger of agony had drawn lines upon his haggard brow. A great fear was upon him, and he gripped my hand with the cold grasp

of death itself. In that darkened room, it seemed to me I saw the angel of peace standing by the bed, but it stood aloof, as one often offended. It seemed to me, at the head of the bed the demon of eternal darkness bent over, whispering to him, 'It is too late! it is too late!' The dying man looked at me — oh, such a look! May you never be called upon to witness its like. He gasped, 'I have lived—I have lived a sinful life—Is it too late?' 'No,' I said, trembling. 'Say you believe.' His lips moved, but no sound came. He died as he had lived. The one necessary minute was withheld. Do you hear? *It—was—withheld.* He had not the minute to call his own. Not that minute in which to turn from everlasting damnation. He—went—down—into—*hell*, dying as he had lived."
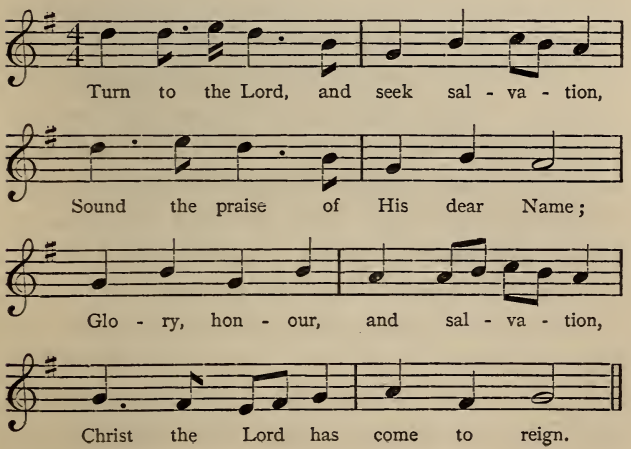
The preacher's voice rose until it sounded like a trumpet-blast. His eyes shone, and his face flushed with the fervour of his theme. Then followed, as rapidly as words could utter, a lurid, awful picture of hell and the day of judgment. Sobs and groans were heard in every part of the room. "Come—now—*now*," he cried. "Now is the appointed time, now is the day of salvation. Come now; and as you rise, pray God that in His mercy He may spare you strength and life to reach the penitent bench."

Suddenly the preacher ceased talking. Stretch-

ing out his hands, he broke forth, with his splendid tenor voice, into the rousing hymn, with its spirited marching time—



The whole congregation joined him. Everyone knew the words and the tune. It seemed a relief to the pent-up feelings to sing at the top of the voice. The chorus rose like a triumphal march—



As the congregation sang, the preacher, in stentorian tones, urged sinners to seek the Lord while He was yet to be found.

Yates felt the electric thrill in the air, and he tugged at his collar, as if he were choking. He could not understand the strange exaltation that had come over him. It seemed as if he must cry aloud. All those around him were much moved. There were now no scoffers at the back of the room. Most of them seemed frightened, and sat looking one at the other. It only needed a beginning, and the penitent bench would be crowded. Many eyes were turned on Macdonald. His face was livid, and great beads of perspiration stood on his brow. His strong hand clutched the back of the seat before him, and the muscles stood out on the portion of his arm that was bare. He stared, like a hypnotised man, at the preacher. His teeth were set, and he breathed hard, as would a man engaged in a struggle. At last the hand of the preacher seemed to be pointed directly at him. He rose tremblingly to his feet and staggered down the aisle, flinging himself on his knees, with his head on his arms, beside the penitent bench, groaning aloud.
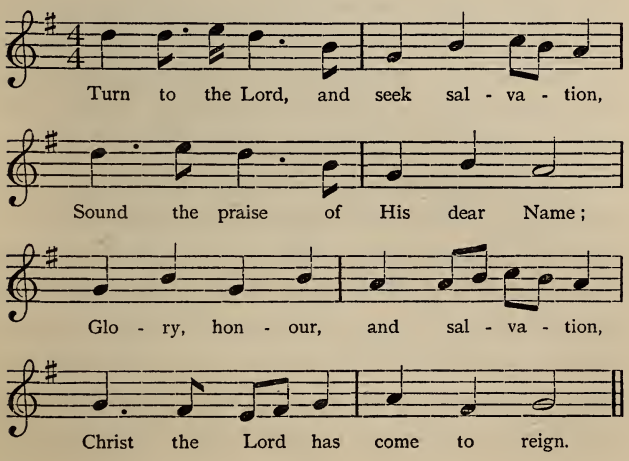
"Bless the Lord!" cried the preacher.

It was the starting of the avalanche. Up the aisle, with pale faces, many with tears streaming from their eyes, walked the young men and the old. Mothers, with joy in their hearts and a prayer

on their lips, saw their sons fall prostrate before the penitent bench. Soon the contrite had to kneel wherever they could. The ringing salvation march filled the air, mingled with cries of joy and devout ejaculations.

"God!" cried Yates, tearing off his collar, "what is the matter with me? I never felt like this before. I must get into the open air."

He made for the door, and escaped unnoticed in the excitement of the moment. He stood for a time by the fence outside, breathing deeply of the cool, sweet air. The sound of the hymn came faintly to him. He clutched the fence, fearing he was about to faint. Partially recovering himself at last, he ran with all his might up the road, while there rang in his ears the marching words—



CHAPTER XIV

WHEN people are thrown together, especially when they are young, the mutual relationship existing between them rarely remains stationary. It drifts towards like or dislike; and cases have been known where it progressed into love or hatred.

Stillson Renmark and Margaret Howard became, at least, very firm friends. Each of them would have been ready to admit this much. These two had a good foundation on which to build up an acquaintance, in the fact that Margaret's brother was a student in the university of which the professor was a worthy member. They had also a subject of difference which, if it leads not to heated argument but is soberly discussed, lends itself even more to the building of friendship than subjects of agreement. Margaret held, as has been indicated in a previous chapter, that the university was wrong in closing its doors to women. Renmark, up to the time of their first conversation on the subject, had given the matter but little thought; yet he developed an opinion contrary to that of

Margaret, and was too honest a man, or too little of a diplomatist, to conceal it. On one occasion, Yates had been present, and he threw himself, with the energy that distinguished him, into the woman side of the question—cordially agreeing with Margaret, citing instances, and holding those who were against the admission of women up to ridicule, taunting them with fear of feminine competition. Margaret became silent as the champion of her cause waxed the more eloquent; but whether she liked Richard Yates the better for his championship, who that is not versed in the ways of women can say? As the hope of winning her regard was the sole basis of Yates's uncompromising views on the subject, it is likely that he was successful, for his experiences with the sex were large and varied. Margaret was certainly attracted towards Renmark, whose deep scholarship, even his excessive self-depreciation could not entirely conceal; and he, in turn, had naturally a schoolmaster's enthusiasm over a pupil who so earnestly desired advancement in knowledge. Had he described his feelings to Yates, who was an expert in many matters, he would perhaps have learned that he was in love; but Renmark was a reticent man, not much given either to introspection or to being lavish with his confidences. As to Margaret, who can plummet the depth of a young girl's regard, until she herself gives some indication? All that one is able to

record is, that she was kinder to Yates than she had been at the beginning.

Miss Kitty Bartlett, probably, would not have denied that she had a sincere liking for the conceited young man from New York. Renmark fell into the error of thinking Miss Kitty a frivolous young person, whereas she was merely a girl who had an inexhaustible fund of high spirits, and one who took a most deplorable pleasure in shocking a serious man. Even Yates made a slight mistake regarding her on one occasion, when they were having an evening walk together, with that freedom from chaperonage which is the birthright of every American girl, whether she belongs to a farmhouse or to the palace of a millionaire.

In describing the incident afterwards to Renmark (for Yates had nothing of his comrade's reserve in these matters), he said—

"She left a diagram of her four fingers on my cheek, that felt like one of those raised maps of Switzerland. I have before now felt the tap of a lady's fan in admonition, but never in my life have I met a gentle reproof that felt so much like a censure from the paw of our friend Tom Sayers."

Renmark said, with some severity, that he hoped Yates would not forget that he was, in a measure, a guest of his neighbours.

"Oh, *that's* all right," said Yates. "If you have any spare sympathy to bestow, keep it for me.

My neighbours are amply able, and more than willing, to take care of themselves."

And now, as to Richard Yates himself. One would imagine that here, at least, a conscientious relater of events would have an easy task. Alas! such is far from being the fact. The case of Yates was by all odds the most complex and bewildering of the four. He was deeply and truly in love with both of the girls. Instances of this kind are not so rare as a young man, newly engaged to an innocent girl, tries to make her believe. Cases have been known where a chance meeting with one girl, and not with another, has settled who was to be a young man's companion during a long life. Yates felt that in multitude of counsel there is wisdom, and made no secret of his perplexity to his friend. He complained sometimes that he got little help towards the solution of the problem, but generally he was quite content to sit under the trees with Renmark and weigh the different advantages of each of the girls. He sometimes appealed to his friend, as a man with a mathematical turn of mind, possessing an education that extended far into conic sections and algebraic formulæ, to balance up the lists, and give him a candid and statistical opinion as to which of the two he should favour with serious proposals. When these appeals for help were coldly received, he accused his friend of lack of sympathy with his dilemma, said that he

was a soulless man, and that if he had a heart, it had become incrusted with the useless débris of a higher education, and swore to confide in him no more. He would search for a friend, he said, who had something human about him. The search for the sympathetic friend, however, seemed to be unsuccessful; for Yates always returned to Renmark, to have, as he remarked, ice-water dashed upon his duplex-burning passion.

It was a lovely afternoon in the latter part of May 1866, and Yates was swinging idly in the hammock, with his hands clasped under his head, gazing dreamily up at the patches of blue sky seen through the green branches of the trees overhead; while his industrious friend was unromantically peeling potatoes near the door of the tent.

"The human heart, Renny," said the man in the hammock reflectively, "is a remarkable organ, when you come to think of it. I presume, from your lack of interest, that you haven't given the subject much study, except perhaps in a physiological way. At the present moment, it is to me the only theme worthy of a man's entire attention. Perhaps that is the result of spring, as the poet says; but anyhow, it presents new aspects to me each hour. Now, I have made this important discovery, that the girl I am with last seems to me the most desirable. That is contrary to the observation of philosophers of bygone days. Absence

makes the heart grow fonder, *they* say. I don't find it so. Presence is what plays the very deuce with me. Now, how do you account for it, Stilly?"

The professor did not attempt to account for it, but silently attended to the business in hand. Yates withdrew his eyes from the sky, and fixed them on the professor, waiting for the answer that did not come.

"Mr. Renmark," he drawled at last, "I am convinced that your treatment of the potato is a mistake. I think potatoes should not be peeled the day before, and left to soak in cold water until to-morrow's dinner. Of course, I admire the industry that gets work well over before its results are called for. Nothing is more annoying than work left untouched until the last moment, and then hurriedly done. Still, virtue may be carried to excess, and a man may be too previous."

"Well, I am quite willing to relinquish the work into your hands. You may perhaps remember, that for two days I have been doing your share as well as my own."

"Oh, I am not complaining about *that*, at all," said the hammock magnanimously. "You are acquiring practical knowledge, Renny, that will be of more use to you than all the learning taught at the schools. My only desire is, that your education should be as complete as possible: and, to this end, I am willing to subordinate my own yearning

desire for scullery work. I should suggest that, instead of going to the trouble of entirely removing the covering of the potato in that laborious way, you should merely peel a belt around its greatest circumference. Then, rather than cook the potatoes in the slow and soggy manner that seems to delight you, you should boil them quickly, with some salt placed in the water. The remaining coat would then curl outward, and the resulting potato would be white and dry and mealy, instead of being in the condition of a wet sponge."

"The beauty of a precept, Yates, is the illustrating of it. If you are not satisfied with my way of boiling potatoes, give me a practical object-lesson."

The man in the hammock sighed reproachfully.

"Of course, an unimaginative person like you, Renmark, cannot realise the cruelty of suggesting that a man, as deeply in love as I am, should demean himself by attending to the prosaic details of household affairs. I am doubly in love, and much more, therefore, as that old bore, Euclid, used to say, is your suggestion unkind and uncalled for."

"All right then; don't criticise."

"Yes, there is a certain sweet reasonableness in your curt suggestion. A man who is unable, or unwilling, to work in the vineyard should not find fault with the pickers. And now, Renny, for the hundredth time of asking, add to the many obligations already conferred, and tell me, like the good

fellow you are, what you would do if you were in my place. To which of those two charming, but totally unlike girls, would you give the preference?"

"Damn!" said the professor quietly.

"Hello, Renny!" cried Yates, raising his head. "Have you cut your finger? I should have warned you about using too sharp a knife."

But the professor had not cut his finger. His use of the word given above is not to be defended; still, as it was spoken by him, it seemed to lose all relationship with swearing. He said it quietly, mildly, and, in a certain sense, innocently. He was astonished at himself for using it, but there had been moments, during the past few days, when the ordinary expletives used in the learned volumes of higher mathematics did not fit the occasion.

Before anything more could be said, there was a shout from the roadway near them.

"Is Richard Yates there?" hailed the voice.

"Yes. Who wants him?" cried Yates, springing out of the hammock.

"I do," said a young fellow on horseback. He threw himself off a tired horse, tied the animal to a sapling,—which, judging by the horse's condition, was an entirely unnecessary operation,—jumped over the rail fence, and approached through the woods. The young men saw, coming towards them, a tall lad in the uniform of the telegraph-service.

"I'm Yates. What is it?"

"Well," said the lad, "I've had a hunt and a half for you. Here's a telegram."

"How in the world did you find out where I was? Nobody has my address."

"That's just the trouble. It would have saved somebody in New York a pile of money if you had left it. No man ought to go to the woods without leaving his address at a telegraph-office, anyhow." The young man looked at the world from a telegraph point of view. People were good or bad, according to the trouble they gave a telegraph-messenger. Yates took the yellow envelope, addressed in lead-pencil, but, without opening it, repeated his question:

"But how on earth did you find me?"

"Well, it wasn't easy," said the boy. "My horse is about done out. I'm from Buffalo. They telegraphed from New York that we were to spare no expense; and we haven't. There are seven other fellows scouring the country on horseback, with duplicates of that despatch, and some more have gone along the lake shore on the American side. Say, no other messenger has been here before me, has he?" asked the boy, with a touch of anxiety in his voice.

"No; you are the first."

"I'm glad of that. I've been 'most all over Canada. I got on your trail about two hours ago,

and the folks at the farmhouse down below said you were up here. Is there any answer?"

Yates tore open the envelope. The despatch was long, and he read it with a deepening frown. It was to this effect:

"Fenians crossing into Canada at Buffalo. You are near the spot; get there as quick as possible. Five of our men leave for Buffalo to-night. General O'Neill is in command of Fenian army. He will give you every facility when you tell him who you are. When five arrive, they will report to you. Place one or two with Canadian troops. Get one to hold the telegraph-wire, and send over all the stuff the wire will carry. Draw on us for cash you need; and don't spare expense."

When Yates finished the reading of this, he broke forth into a line of language that astonished Renmark, and drew forth the envious admiration of the Buffalo telegraph-boy.

"Heavens and earth and the lower regions! I'm here on my vacation. I'm not going to jump into work, for all the papers in New York. Why couldn't those fools of Fenians stay at home? The idiots don't know when they're well off. The Fenians, be hanged!"

"Guess that's what they will be," said the telegraph-boy. "Any answer, sir?"

"No. Tell 'em you couldn't find me."

"Don't expect the boy to tell a lie," said the professor, speaking for the first time.

"Oh, I don't mind a lie!" exclaimed the boy, "but not that one. No, sir. I've had too much trouble finding you. I'm not going to pretend I'm no good. I started out for to find you, and I have. But I'll tell any other lie you like, Mr. Yates; if it will oblige you."

Yates recognised in the boy the same emulous desire to outstrip his fellows that had influenced himself when he was a young reporter, and he at once admitted the injustice of attempting to deprive him of the fruits of his enterprise.

"No," he said, "that won't do. No; you have found me, and you're a young fellow who will be president of the Telegraph Company some day, or perhaps hold the less important office of the United States Presidency. Who knows? Have you a telegraph-blank?"

"Of course," said the boy, fishing out a bundle from the leathern wallet by his side. Yates took the paper, and flung himself down under the tree.

"Here's a pencil," said the messenger.

"A newspaper man is never without a pencil, thank you," replied Yates, taking one out of his inside pocket.

"Now, Renmark, I'm not going to tell a lie on this occasion," continued Yates.

"I think the truth is better on all occasions."

"Right you are. So here goes for the solid truth."

Yates, as he lay on the ground, wrote rapidly on the telegraph-blank. Suddenly he looked up, and said to the professor, "Say, Renmark, are you a doctor?"

"Of laws," replied his friend.

"Oh, that will do just as well." And he finished his writing.

"How is this?" he cried, holding the paper at arm's length—

"L. F. Spencer,
Managing Editor *Argus*, New York.

"I'm flat on my back. Haven't done a hand's turn for a week. Am under the constant care, night and day, of one of the most eminent doctors in Canada, who even prepares my food for me. Since leaving New York, trouble of the heart has complicated matters, and at present baffles the doctor. Consultations daily. It is impossible for me to move from here until present complications have yielded to treatment.

"Simson would be a good man to take charge in my absence. YATES."

"There," said Yates, with a tone of satisfaction, when he had finished the reading. "What do you think of that?"

The professor frowned, but did not answer. The boy, who partly saw through it, but not quite, grinned, and said, "Is it true?"

"Of course it's true!" cried Yates, indignant at the unjust suspicion. "It is a great deal more true than you have any idea of. Ask the doctor there if it isn't true. Now, my boy, will you give this in when you get back to the office? Tell 'em to rush it through to New York. I would mark it 'rush,' only that never does any good, and always makes the operator mad."

The boy took the paper, and put it in his wallet.

"It's to be paid for at the other end," continued Yates.

"Oh, that's all right," answered the messenger, with a certain condescension, as if he were giving credit on behalf of the company. "Well, so long," he added. "I hope you'll soon be better, Mr. Yates."

Yates sprang to his feet, with a laugh, and followed him to the fence.

"Now, youngster, you are up to snuff, I can see that. They'll perhaps question you when you get back. What will you say?"

"Oh, I'll tell 'em what a hard job I had to find you, and let 'em know nobody else could 'a' done it, and I'll say you're a pretty sick man. I won't tell 'em you gave me a dollar."

"Right you are, sonny; *you'll* get along. Here's five dollars, all in one bill. If you meet any other of the messengers, take them back with you. There's no use of their wasting valuable time in this little neck of the woods."

The boy stuffed the bill into his vest-pocket as carelessly as if it represented cents instead of dollars, mounted his tired horse, and waved his hand in farewell to the newspaper man. Yates turned and walked slowly back to the tent. He threw himself once more into the hammock. As he expected, the professor was more taciturn than ever, and, although he had been prepared for silence, the silence irritated him. He felt ill-used at having so unsympathetic a companion.

"Look here, Renmark, why don't you say something?"

"There is nothing to say."

"Oh yes, there is. You don't approve of me, do you?"

"I don't suppose it makes any difference whether I approve or not."

"Oh yes, it does. A man likes to have the approval of even the humblest of his fellow-creatures. Say, what will you take in cash to approve of me? People talk of the tortures of conscience, but you are more uncomfortable than the most cast-iron conscience any man ever had. One's own conscience one can deal with, but a conscience in the person of another man is beyond one's control. Now, it is like this. I am here for quiet and rest. I have earned both, and I think I am justified in"—

"Now, Mr. Yates, please spare me any cheap philosophy on the question. I am tired of it."

"And of me too, I suppose?"

"Well, yes, rather—if you want to know."

Yates sprang out of the hammock. For the first time since the encounter with Bartlett on the road, Renmark saw that he was thoroughly angry. The reporter stood with clenched fists and flashing eyes, hesitating. The other, his heavy brows drawn, while not in an aggressive attitude, was plainly ready for an attack. Yates concluded to speak, and not to strike. This was not because he was afraid, for he was not a coward. The reporter realised that he had forced the conversation, and remembered he had invited Renmark to accompany him. Although this recollection stayed his hand, it had no effect on his tongue.

"I believe," he said slowly, "that it would do you good for once to hear a straight, square, unbiased opinion of yourself. You have associated so long with pupils, to whom your word is law, that it may interest you to know what a man of the world thinks of you. A few years of schoolmastering is enough to spoil an archangel. Now, I think, of all the"—

The sentence was interrupted by a cry from the fence—

"Say, do you gentlemen know where a fellow named Yates lives?"

The reporter's hand dropped to his side. A look of dismay came over his face, and his truculent manner changed, with a suddenness that forced a smile even to the stern lips of Renmark.

Yates backed towards the hammock, like a man who had received an unexpected blow.

"I say, Renny," he wailed, "it's another of those cursed telegraph-messengers. Go, like a good fellow, and sign for the despatch. Sign it, 'Dr. Renmark, for R. Yates.' That will give it a sort of official, medical-bulletin look. I wish I had thought of that when the other boy was here. Tell him I'm lying down." He flung himself into the hammock, and Renmark, after a moment's hesitation, walked towards the boy at the fence, who had repeated his question in a louder voice. In a short time he returned with the yellow envelope, which he tossed to the man in the hammock. Yates seized it savagely, tore it into a score of pieces, and scattered the fluttering bits around him on the ground. The professor stood there for a few moments in silence.

"Perhaps," he said at last, "you'll be good enough to go on with your remarks."

"I was merely going to say," answered Yates wearily, "that you are a mighty good fellow, Renny. People who camp out, always have rows. That is our first; suppose we let it be the last. Camping out is something like married life, I guess, and

requires some forbearance on both sides. That philosophy may be cheap, but I think it is accurate. I am really very much worried about this newspaper business. I ought, of course, to fling myself into the chasm like that Roman fellow; but, hang it, I've been flinging myself into chasms for fifteen years, and what good has it done? There's always a crisis in a daily newspaper office. I want them to understand in the *Argus* office, that I am on my vacation."

"They will be more apt to understand from the telegram, that you're on your deathbed."

Yates laughed. "That's so," he said; "but you see, Renny, we New-Yorkers live in such an atmosphere of exaggeration, and if I did not put it strongly, it wouldn't have any effect. You've got to give a big dose to a man who has been taking poison all his life. They will take off ninety per cent. from any statement I make, anyhow; so you see, I have to pile it up pretty high before the remaining ten per cent. amounts to anything."

The conversation was interrupted by the crackling of the dry twigs behind them, and Yates, who had been keeping his eye nervously on the fence, turned round. Young Bartlett pushed his way through the underbrush. His face was red; he had evidently been running.

"Two telegrams for you, Mr. Yates," he panted. "The fellows that brought 'em said they were

important; so I ran out with them myself, for fear they wouldn't find you. One of them's from Port Colborne, the other's from Buffalo."

Telegrams were rare on the farm, and young Bartlett looked on the receipt of one as an event in a man's life. He was astonished to see Yates receive the double event with a listlessness that he could not help thinking was merely assumed for effect. Yates held his hand, and did not tear them up at once, out of consideration for the feelings of the young man, who had had a race to deliver them.

"Here's two books they wanted you to sign. They're tired out, and mother's giving them something to eat."

"Professor, you sign for me, won't you?" said Yates.

Bartlett lingered a moment, hoping that he would hear something of the contents of the important messages; but Yates did not even open the envelopes, although he thanked the young man heartily for bringing them.

"Stuck-up cuss!" muttered young Bartlett to himself, as he shoved the signed books into his pocket and pushed his way through the underbrush again. Yates slowly and methodically tore the envelopes and their contents into little pieces, and scattered them as before.

"Begins to look like autumn," he said, "with the yellow leaves strewing the ground."

CHAPTER XV

BEFORE night, three more telegraph-boys found Yates, and three more telegrams in sections helped to carpet the floor of the forest. The usually high spirits of the newspaper man went down and down under the repeated visitations. At last he did not even swear, which, in the case of Yates, always indicated extreme depression. As night drew on, he feebly remarked to the professor, that he was more tired than he had ever been in going through an election campaign. He went to his tent-bunk early, in a state of such utter dejection that Renmark felt sorry for him, and tried ineffectually to cheer him up.

"If they would all come together," said Yates bitterly, "so that one comprehensive effort of malediction would include the lot and have it over, it wouldn't be so bad; but this constant dribbling in of messengers would wear out the patience of a saint."

As he sat in his shirt-sleeves on the edge of his bunk, Renmark said that things would look brighter in the morning—which was a safe remark to make, for the night was dark.

Yates sat silently, with his head in his hands, for some moments. At last he said slowly, "There is no one so obtuse as the thoroughly good man. It is not the messenger I am afraid of, after all. He is but the outward symptom of the inward trouble. What you are seeing is an example of the workings of conscience, where you thought conscience was absent. The trouble with me is that I know the newspaper depends on me, and that it will be the first time I have failed. It is the newspaper man's instinct to be in the centre of the fray. He yearns to scoop the opposition press. I will get a night's sleep if I can, and to-morrow, I know, I shall capitulate. I will hunt out General O'Neill, and interview him on the field of slaughter. I will telegraph pages. I will refurbish my military vocabulary, and speak of deploying and massing and throwing out advance guards, and that sort of thing. I will move detachments and advance brigades, and invent strategy. We will have desperate fighting in the columns of the *Argus*, whatever there is on the fields of Canada. But to a man who has seen real war, this *opéra-bouffe* masquerade of fighting—I don't want to say anything harsh—but to me it is offensive."

He looked up with a wan smile at his partner, sitting on the bottom of an upturned pail, as he said this. Then he reached for his hip-pocket and drew out a revolver, which he handed, butt-end

forward, to the professor, who, not knowing his friend carried such an instrument, instinctively shrank from it.

"Here, Renny, take this weapon of devastation and soak it with the potatoes. If another messenger comes in on me to-night, I know I shall riddle him if I have this handy. My better judgment tells me he is innocent, and I don't want to shed the only blood that will be spilled during this awful campaign."

How long they had been asleep they did not know, as the ghost-stories have it, but both were suddenly awakened by a commotion outside. It was intensely dark inside the tent, but as the two sat up, they noticed a faint, moving blur of light, which made itself just visible through the canvas.

"It's another of those fiendish messengers," whispered Yates. "Gi' me that revolver."

"Hush!" said the other, below his breath. "There's about a dozen men out there, judging by the footfalls. I heard them coming."

"Let's fire into the tent and be done with it," said a voice outside.

"No, no," cried another; "no man shoot. It makes too much noise, and there must be others about. Have ye all got yer bayonets fixed?"

There was a murmur, apparently in the affirmative.

"Very well, then. Murphy and O'Rourick, come round to this side. You three stay where you are.

Tim, you go to that end; and, Doolin, come with me."

"The Fenian army, by all the gods!" whispered Yates, groping for his clothes. "Renny, give me that revolver, and I'll show you more fun than a funeral."

"No, no. They're at least three to our one. We're in a trap here, and helpless."

"Oh, just let me jump out among 'em and begin the fireworks. Those I didn't shoot would die of fright. Imagine scouts scouring the woods with a lantern—with a *lantern*, Renny! Think of that! Oh, this is pie! Let me at 'em."

"Hush! Keep quiet! They'll hear you."

"Tim, bring the lantern round to this side." The blur of light moved along the canvas. "There's a man with his back against the wall of the tent. Just touch him up with yer bayonet, Murphy, and let him know we're here."

"There may be twenty in the tent," said Murphy cautiously.

"Do what I tell you," answered the man in command.

Murphy progged his bayonet through the canvas, and sunk the deadly point of the instrument into the bag of potatoes.

"Faith, he sleeps sound," said Murphy, with a tremor of fear in his voice, as there was no demonstration on the part of the bag.

The voice of Yates rang out from the interior of the tent,—

"What the old Harry do you fellows think you're doing, anyhow? What's the matter with you? What do you want?"

There was a moment's silence, broken only by a nervous scuffling of feet and the clicking of gun-locks.

"How many are there of you in there?" said the stern voice of the chief.

"Two, if you want to know, both unarmed, and one ready to fight the lot of you if you are anxious for a scrimmage."

"Come out one by one," was the next command.

"We'll come out one by one," said Yates, emerging in his shirt-sleeves, "but you can't expect us to keep it up long, as there are only two of us."

The professor next appeared, with his coat on. The situation certainly did not look inviting. The lantern on the ground threw up a pallid glow on the severe face of the commander, as the footlights might illuminate the figure of a brigand in a wood on the stage. The face of the officer showed that he was greatly impressed with the importance and danger of his position. Yates glanced about him with a smile, all his recent dejection gone, now that he was in the midst of a row.

"Which is Murphy," he said, "and which is Doolin? Hello, alderman," he cried, as his eyes

rested on one tall, strapping, red-haired man who held his bayonet ready to charge, with a fierce determination in his face that might have made an opponent quail. "When did you leave New York? and who's running the city, now that you're gone

The men had evidently a sense of humour, in spite of their blood-thirsty business, for a smile flickered on their faces in the lantern-light, and several bayonets were unconsciously lowered. But the hard face of the commander did not relax.

"You are doing yourself no good by your talk," he said solemnly. "What you say will be used against you."

"Yes, and what you do will be used against *you*; and don't forget that fact. It's you who are in danger—not I. You are, at this moment, making about the biggest ass of yourself there is in Canada."

"Pinion these men," cried the captain gruffly.

"Pinion nothing!" shouted Yates, shaking off the grasp of a man who had sprung to his side. But both Yates and Renmark were speedily overpowered; and then an unseen difficulty presented itself. Murphy pathetically remarked that they had no rope. The captain was a man of resource.

"Cut enough rope from the tent to tie them."

"And when you're at it, Murphy," said Yates, "cut off enough more to hang yourself with. You'll need it before long. And remember, that any

damage you do to that tent, you'll have to pay for. It's hired."

Yates gave them all the trouble he could while they tied his elbows and wrists together, offering sardonic suggestions and cursing their clumsiness. Renmark submitted quietly. When the operation was finished, the professor said, with the calm confidence of one who has an empire behind him and knows it,—

"I warn you, sir, that this outrage is committed on British soil; and that I, on whom it is committed, am a British subject."

"Heavens and earth, Renmark, if you find it impossible to keep your mouth shut, do not use the word 'subject,' but 'citizen.'"

"I am satisfied with the word, and with the protection given to those who use it."

"Look here, Renmark, you had better let me do the talking. You will only put your foot in it. I know the kind of men I have to deal with; you evidently don't."

In tying the professor, they came upon the pistol in his coat-pocket. Murphy held it up to the light.

"I thought you said you were unarmed?" remarked the captain severely, taking the revolver in his hand.

"I was unarmed. The revolver is mine, but the professor would not let me use it. If he had, all of

you would be running for dear life through the woods."

"You admit that you are a British subject?" said the captain to Renmark, ignoring Yates.

"He doesn't admit it, he brags of it," said the latter, before Renmark could speak. "You can't scare him; so quit this fooling, and let us know how long we are to stand here trussed up like this."

"I propose, captain," said the red-headed man, "that we shoot these men where they stand, and report to the general. They are spies. They are armed, and they denied it. It's according to the rules of war, captain."

"Rules of war? What do you know of the rules of war, you red-headed Senegambian? Rules of Hoyle! Your line is digging sewers, I imagine. Come, captain, undo these ropes, and make up your mind quickly. Trot us along to General O'Neill just as fast as you can. The sooner you get us there, the more time you will have for being sorry over what you have done."

The captain still hesitated, and looked from one to the other of his men, as if to make up his mind whether they would obey him if he went to extremities. Yates's quick eye noted that the two prisoners had nothing to hope for, even from the men who smiled. The shooting of two unarmed and bound men seemed to them about the correct way of beginning a great struggle for freedom.

"Well," said the captain at length, "we must do it in proper form, so I suppose we should have a court-martial. Are you agreed?"

They were unanimously agreed.

"Look here," cried Yates, and there was a certain impressiveness in his voice in spite of his former levity, "this farce has gone just as far as it is going. Go inside the tent there, and in my coat-pocket you will find a telegram, the first of a dozen or two received by me within the last twenty-four hours. Then you will see whom you propose to shoot."

The telegram was found, and the captain read it, while Tim held the lantern. He looked from under his knitted brows at the newspaper man.

"Then, you are one of the *Argus* staff."

"I am chief of the *Argus* staff. As you see, five of my men will be with General O'Neill to-morrow. The first question they will ask him will be, 'Where is Yates?' The next thing that will happen will be, that you will be hanged for your stupidity, not by Canada nor by the State of New York, but by your general, who will curse your memory ever after. You are fooling, not with a subject this time, but with a citizen; and your general is not such an idiot as to monkey with the United States Government; and, what is a blamed sight worse, with the great American press. Come, captain, we've had enough of this. Cut these cords just as quickly as you can, and take us

to the general. We were going to see him in the morning, anyhow."

"But this man says he is a Canadian."

"That's all right. My friend is *me*. If you touch him, you touch me. Now, hurry up. Climb down from your perch. I shall have enough trouble now, getting the general to forgive all the blunders you have made to-night, without your adding insult to injury. Tell your men to untie us, and throw the ropes back into the tent. It will soon be daylight. Hustle, and let us be off."

"Untie them," said the captain, with a sigh.

Yates shook himself when his arms regained their freedom.

"Now, Tim," he said, "run into that tent and bring out my coat. It's chilly here."

Tim did instantly as requested, and helped Yates on with the coat.

"Good boy!" said Yates. "You've evidently been porter in a hotel."

Tim grinned.

"I think," said Yates meditatively, "that if you look under the right-hand bunk, Tim, you will find a jug. It belongs to the professor, although he has hidden it under my bed to divert suspicion from himself. Just fish it out and bring it here. It is not as full as it was, but there's enough to go round, if the professor does not take more than his share."

The gallant troop smacked their lips in anticipation, and Renmark looked astonished to see the jar brought forth. "You first, professor," said Yates; and Tim innocently offered him the vessel. The learned man shook his head. Yates laughed, and took it himself.

"Well, here's to you, boys," he said. "And may you all get back as safely to New York as I will." The jar passed down along the line, until Tim finished its contents.

"Now, then, for the camp of the Fenian army," cried Yates, taking Renmark's arm; and they began their march through the woods.

"Great Cæsar, Stilly," he continued to his friend, "this is rest and quiet with a vengeance, isn't it?"

CHAPTER XVI

THE Fenians, feeling that they had to put their best foot foremost in the presence of their prisoners, tried at first to maintain something like military order in marching through the woods. They soon found, however, that this was a difficult thing to do. Canadian forests are not as trimly kept as English parks. Tim walked on ahead with the lantern, but three times he tumbled over some obstruction, and disappeared suddenly from view, uttering maledictions. His final effort in this line was a triumph. He fell over the lantern and smashed it. When all attempts at reconstruction failed, the party tramped on in go-as-you-please fashion, and found they did better without the light than with it. In fact, although it was not yet four o'clock, daybreak was already filtering through the trees, and the woods were perceptibly lighter.

"We must be getting near the camp," said the captain.

"Will I shout, sir?" asked Murphy.

"No, no; we can't miss it. Keep on as you are doing."

They were nearer the camp than they suspected. As they blundered on among the crackling underbrush and dry twigs, the sharp report of a rifle echoed through the forest, and a bullet whistled above their heads.

"Fat the divil are you foiring at, Mike Lynch?" cried the alderman, who recognised the shooter now rapidly falling back.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said the sentry, stopping in his flight. The captain strode angrily towards him.

"What do you mean by firing like that? Don't you know enough to ask for the countersign before shooting?"

"Sure, I forgot about it, captain, entirely. But then, ye see, I never can hit anything: so it's little difference it makes."

The shot had roused the camp, and there was now wild commotion, everybody thinking the Canadians were upon them.

A strange sight met the eye of Yates and Renmark. Both were astonished to see the number of men that O'Neill had under his command. They found a motley crowd. Some tattered United States uniforms were among them, but the greater number were dressed as ordinary individuals, although a few had trimmings of green braid on their clothes. Sleeping out for a couple of nights had given the gathering the unkempt

appearance of a great company of tramps. The officers were indistinguishable from the men at first, but afterwards Yates noticed that they, mostly in plain clothes and slouch hats, had sword-belts buckled around them; and one or two had swords that had evidently seen service in the United States cavalry.

"It's all right, boys," cried the captain to the excited mob. "It was only that fool Lynch who fired at us. There's nobody hurt. Where's the general?"

"Here he comes," said half a dozen voices at once, and the crowd made way for him.

General O'Neill was dressed in ordinary citizen's costume, and did not wear even a sword-belt. On his head of light hair was a black soft felt hat. His face was pale, and covered with freckles. He looked more like a clerk from a grocery store than the commander of an army. He was evidently somewhere between thirty-five and forty years of age.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said. "Why are you back? Any news?"

The captain saluted, military fashion, and replied,—

"We took two prisoners, sir. They were encamped in a tent in the woods. One of them says he is an American citizen, and says he knows you, so I brought them in."

"I wish you had brought in the tent too," said the general, with a wan smile. "It would be an improvement on sleeping in the open air. Are these the prisoners? I don't know either of them."

"The captain makes a mistake in saying that I claimed a personal acquaintance with you, general. What I said was, that you would recognise, somewhat quicker than he did, who I was, and the desirability of treating me with reasonable decency. Just show the general that telegram you took from my coat-pocket, captain."

The paper was produced, and O'Neill read it over once or twice.

"You are on the New York *Argus*, then?"

"Very much so, general."

"I hope you have not been roughly used?"

"Oh no; merely tied up in a hard knot, and threatened with shooting—that's all."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Still, you must make some allowance at a time like this. If you will come with me, I will write you a pass which will prevent any similar mistake happening in the future." The general led the way to a smouldering camp-fire, where, out of a valise, he took writing materials and, using the valise as a desk, began to write. After he had written "Headquarters of the Grand Army of the Irish Republic," he looked up, and asked Yates his Christian name. Being answered, he inquired the name of his friend.

"I want nothing from you," interposed Renmark. 'Don't put my name on the paper."

"Oh, that's all right," said Yates. "Never mind him, general. He's a learned man, who doesn't know when to talk and when not to. As you march up to our tent, general, you will see an empty jug which will explain everything. Renmark's drunk, not to put too fine a point upon it; and he imagines himself a British subject."

The Fenian general looked up at the professor.

"Are you a Canadian?" he asked.

"Certainly I am."

"Well, in that case, if I let you leave camp, you must give me your word that, should you fall in with the enemy, you will give no information to them of our position, numbers, or of anything else you may have seen while with us."

"I shall not give my word. On the contrary, if I should fall in with the Canadian troops, I will tell them where you are, that you are from eight hundred to one thousand strong, and the worst-looking set of vagabonds I have ever seen out of jail."

General O'Neill frowned, and looked from one to the other.

"Do you realise that you confess to being a spy, and that it becomes my duty to have you taken out and shot?"

"In real war, yes. But this is mere idiotic

fooling. All of you that don't escape, will be either in jail or shot before twenty-four hours."

"Well, by the gods, it won't help *you* any. I'll have you shot inside of ten minutes, instead of twenty-four hours."

"Hold on, general, hold on!" cried Yates, as the angry man rose and confronted the two. "I admit that he richly deserves shooting, if you were the fool-killer, which you are not. But it won't do. I will be responsible for him. Just finish that pass for me, and I will take care of the professor. Shoot me if you like, but don't touch him. He hasn't any sense, as you can see; but I am not to blame for that, nor are you. If you take to shooting everybody who is an ass, general, you won't have any ammunition left with which to conquer Canada."

The general smiled in spite of himself, and resumed the writing of the pass. "There," he said, handing the paper to Yates. "You see, we always like to oblige the press. I will risk your belligerent friend, and I hope you will exercise more control over him, if you meet the Canadians, than you were able to exert here. Don't you think, on the whole, you had better stay with us? We are going to march in a couple of hours, when the men have had a little rest." He added in a lower voice, so that the professor could not hear, "You didn't see anything of the Canadians, I suppose?"

"Not a sign. No, I don't think I'll stay. There will be five of our fellows here some time to-day, I expect, and that will be more than enough. I'm really here on a vacation. Been ordered rest and quiet. I'm beginning to think I have made a mistake in location."

Yates bade good-bye to the commander, and walked with his friend out of the camp. They threaded their way among sleeping men and groups of stacked guns. On the top of one of the bayonets was hung a tall silk hat, which looked most incongruous in such a place.

"I think," said Yates, "that we will make for the Ridge Road, which must lie somewhere in this direction. It will be easier walking than through the woods; and, besides, I want to stop at one of the farmhouses and get some breakfast. I'm as hungry as a bear, after tramping so long."

"Very well," answered the professor shortly.

The two stumbled along until they reached the edge of the wood; then, crossing some open fields, they came presently upon the road, near the spot where the fist-fight had taken place between Yates and Bartlett. The comrades, now with greater comfort, walked silently along the road towards the west, with the reddening east behind them. The whole scene was strangely quiet and peaceful, and the recollection of the weird camp they had left in the woods, seemed merely a bad dream. The morning

air was sweet, and the birds were beginning to sing. Yates had intended to give the professor a piece of his mind regarding the lack of tact and common-sense displayed by Renmark in the camp, but somehow the scarcely-awakened day did not lend itself to controversy, and the serene stillness soothed his spirit. He began to whistle softly that popular war-song, "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching," and then broke in with the question—

"Say, Renny, did you notice that plug hat on the bayonet?"

"Yes," answered the professor; "and I saw five others scattered around the camp."

"Jingo! you were observant. I can imagine nothing quite so ridiculous as a man going to war in a tall silk hat."

The professor made no reply, and Yates changed his whistling to "Rally round the flag."

"I presume," he said at length, "there is little use in attempting to improve the morning hour by trying to show you, Renmark, what a fool you made of yourself in the camp? Your natural diplomacy seemed to be slightly off the centre."

"I do not hold diplomatic relations with thieves and vagabonds."

"They may be vagabonds; but so am I, for that matter. They may also be well-meaning, mistaken men; but I do not think they are thieves."

"While you were talking with the so-called

general, one party came in with several horses that had been stolen from the neighbouring farmers, and another party started out to get some more."

"Oh, that isn't stealing, Renmark; that's requisitioning. You mustn't use such reckless language. I imagine the second party has been successful; for here are three of them, all mounted."

The three horsemen referred to, stopped their steeds at the sight of the two men coming round the bend of the road, and awaited their approach. Like so many of the others, they wore no uniform, but two of them held revolvers in their hands ready for action. The one who had no visible revolver, moved his horse up the middle of the road towards the pedestrians, the other two taking positions on each side of the waggon-way.

"Who are you? Where do you come from, and where are you going?" cried the foremost horseman, as the two walkers came within talking distance.

"It's all right, commodore," said Yates jauntily, "and the top of the morning to you. We are hungry pedestrians. We have just come from the camp, and we are going to get something to eat."

"I must have a more satisfactory answer than that."

"Well, here you have it, then," answered Yates, pulling out his folded pass, and handing it up to

the horseman. The man read it carefully. "You find that all right, I expect?"

"Right enough to cause your immediate arrest."

"But the general said we were not to be molested further. That is in his own handwriting."

"I presume it is, and all the worse for you. His handwriting does not run quite as far as the Queen's writ in this country yet. I arrest you in the name of the Queen. Cover these men with your revolvers, and shoot them down if they make any resistance." So saying, the rider slipped from his horse, whipped out of his pocket a pair of handcuffs joined by a short, stout, steel chain, and, leaving his horse standing, grasped Renmark's wrist.

"I'm a Canadian," said the professor, wrenching his wrist away. "You mustn't put handcuffs on me."

"You are in very bad company, then. I am a constable of this county; if you are what you say, you will not resist arrest."

"I will go with you, but you mustn't handcuff me."

"Oh, mustn't I?" And, with a quick movement indicative of long practice with resisting criminals, the constable deftly slipped on one of the clasps, which closed with a sharp click and stuck like a burr.

Renmark became deadly pale, and there was a dangerous glitter in his eyes. He drew back his

clinched fist, in spite of the fact that the cocked revolver was edging closer and closer to him, and the constable held his struggling, manacled hand with grim determination.

"Hold on!" cried Yates, preventing the professor from striking the representative of the law. "Don't shoot," he shouted to the man on horseback; "it is all a little mistake, that will be quickly put right. You are three armed and mounted men, and we are only two, unarmed and on foot. There is no need of any revolver practice. Now, Renmark, you are more of a rebel at the present moment than O'Neill. He owes no allegiance, and you do. Have you no respect for the forms of law and order? You are an anarchist at heart, for all your professions. You *would* sing 'God save the Queen!' in the wrong place awhile ago, so now be satisfied that you have got her, or, rather, that she has got you. Now, constable, do you want to hitch the other end of that arrangement on my wrist? or have you another pair for my own special use?"

"I'll take your wrist, if you please."

"All right; here you are." Yates drew back his coat-sleeve, and presented his wrist. The dangling cuff was speedily clamped upon it. The constable mounted the patient horse that stood waiting for him, watching him all the while with intelligent eye. The two prisoners, handcuffed together, took the middle of the road, with a horseman on each side

of them, the constable bringing up the rear; thus they marched on, the professor gloomy from the indignity put upon them, and the newspaper-man as joyous as the now thoroughly awakened birds. The scouts concluded to go no farther towards the enemy, but to return to the Canadian forces with their prisoners. They marched down the road, all silent except Yates, who enlivened the morning air with the singing of "John Brown."

"Keep quiet," said the constable curtly.

"All right, I will. But look here, we shall pass shortly the house of a friend. We want to go and get something to eat."

"You will get nothing to eat until I deliver you up to the officers of the volunteers."

"And where, may I ask, are they?"

"You may ask, but I will not answer."

"Now, Renmark," said Yates to his companion, "the tough part of this episode is that we shall have to pass Bartlett's house, and feast merely on the remembrance of the good things which Mrs. Bartlett is always glad to bestow on the wayfarer. I call that refined cruelty."

As they neared the Bartlett homestead, they caught sight of Miss Kitty on the verandah, shading her eyes from the rising sun, and gazing earnestly at the approaching squad. As soon as she recognised the group, she disappeared, with a cry, into the house. Presently there came out Mrs. Bartlett,

followed by her son, and more slowly by the old man himself.

They all came down to the gate and waited.

"Hello, Mrs. Bartlett," cried Yates cheerily. "You see, the professor has got his deserts at last; and I, being in bad company, share his fate, like the good dog Tray."

"What's all this about?" cried Mrs. Bartlett.

The constable, who knew both the farmer and his wife, nodded familiarly to them. "They're Fenian prisoners," he said.

"Nonsense!" cried Mrs. Bartlett—the old man, as usual, keeping his mouth grimly shut when his wife was present to do the talking—"they're not Fenians. They've been camping on our farm for a week or more."

"That may be," said the constable firmly, "but I have the best of evidence against them; and, if I'm not very much mistaken, they'll hang for it."

Miss Kitty, who had been partly visible through the door, gave a cry of anguish at this remark, and disappeared again.

"We have just escaped being hanged by the Fenians themselves, Mrs. Bartlett, and I hope the same fate awaits us at the hands of the Canadians."

"What! hanging?"

"No, no; just escaping. Not that I object to being hanged; I hope I am not so pernickety as all that; but, Mrs. Bartlett, you will sympathise

with me when I tell you, that the torture I am suffering from at this moment is the remembrance of the good things to eat which I have had in your house. I am simply starved to death, Mrs. Bartlett, and this hard-hearted constable refuses to allow me to ask you for anything."

Mrs. Bartlett came out through the gate to the road in a visible state of indignation.

"Stoliker," she exclaimed, "I'm ashamed of you! You may hang a man if you like, but you have no right to starve him. Come straight in with me," she said to the prisoners.

"Madam," said Stoliker severely, "you must not interfere with the course of the law."

"The course of stuff and nonsense!" cried the angry woman. "Do you think I am afraid of you, Sam Stoliker? Haven't I chased you out of this very orchard, when you were a boy trying to steal my apples? Yes, and boxed your ears too when I caught you, and then was fool enough to fill your pockets with the best apples on the place, after giving you what you deserved. Course of the law, indeed! I'll box your ears now, if you say anything more. Get down off your horse, and have something to eat yourself. I dare say you need it."

"This is what I call a rescue," whispered Yates to his linked companion.

What is a stern upholder of the law to do, when

the interferer with justice is a determined and angry woman accustomed to having her own way? Stoliker looked helplessly at Hiram, as the supposed head of the house, but the old man merely shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say, "You see how it is yourself. I am helpless."

Mrs. Bartlett marched her prisoners through the gate and up to the house.

"All I ask of you now," said Yates, "is that you will give Renmark and me seats together at the table. We cannot bear to be separated, even for an instant."

Having delivered her prisoners to the custody of her daughter, at the same time admonishing her to get breakfast as quickly as possible, Mrs. Bartlett went to the gate again. The constable was still on his horse. Hiram had asked, by way of treating him to a non-controversial subject, if this was the colt he had bought from old Brown, on the second concession, and Stoliker had replied that it was. Hiram was saying he thought he recognised the horse by his sire, when Mrs. Bartlett broke in upon them.

"Come, Sam," she said, "no sulking, you know. Slip off the horse and come in. How's your mother?"

"She's pretty well, thank you," said Sam sheepishly, coming down on his feet again.

Kitty Bartlett, her gaiety gone and her eyes red,

waited on the prisoners; but absolutely refused to serve Sam Stoliker, on whom she looked with the utmost contempt, not taking into account the fact that the poor young man had been merely doing his duty, and doing it well.

"Take off these handcuffs, Sam," said Mrs. Bartlett, "until they have breakfast, at least."

Stoliker produced a key and unlocked the manacles, slipping them into his pocket.

"Ah, now!" said Yates, looking at his red wrist, "we can breathe easier; and I, for one, can eat more."

The professor said nothing. The iron had not only encircled his wrist, but had entered his soul as well. Although Yates tried to make the early meal as cheerful as possible, it was rather a gloomy festival. Stoliker began to feel, poor man, that the paths of duty were unpopular. Old Hiram could always be depended upon to add sombreness and taciturnity to a wedding-feast; the professor, never the liveliest of companions, sat silent, with clouded brow, and vexed even the cheerful Mrs. Bartlett, by having evidently no appetite. When the hurried meal was over, Yates, noticing that Miss Kitty had left the room, sprang up and walked towards the kitchen door. Stoliker was on his feet in an instant, and made as though to follow him.

"Sit down," said the professor sharply, speaking

for the first time. "He is not going to escape. Don't be afraid. He has done nothing, and has no fear of punishment. It is always the innocent that you stupid officials arrest. The woods all around you are full of real Fenians, but you take excellent care to keep out of their way, and give your attention to molesting perfectly inoffensive people."

"Good for you, professor!" cried Mrs. Bartlett emphatically. "That's the truth, if ever it was spoken. But are there Fenians in the woods?"

"Hundreds of them. They came on us in the tent about three o'clock this morning—or at least an advance-guard did—and, after talking of shooting us where we stood, they marched us to the Fenian camp instead. Yates got a pass, written by the Fenian general, so that we should not be troubled again. That is the precious document which this man thinks is deadly evidence. He never asked us a question, but clapped the handcuffs on our wrists, while the other fools held pistols to our heads."

"It isn't my place to ask questions," retorted Stoliker doggedly. "You can tell all this to the colonel or the sheriff; if they let you go, I'll say nothing against it."

Meanwhile, Yates had made his way into the kitchen, taking the precaution to shut the door after him. Kitty Bartlett looked quickly round as the door closed. Before she could speak, the

young man caught her by the plump shoulders—a thing which he certainly had no right to do.

"Miss Kitty Bartlett," he said, "you've been crying."

"I haven't; and if I had, it is nothing to you."

"Oh, I'm not so sure about that. Don't deny it. For whom were you crying? The professor?"

"No, nor for you either, although I suppose you have conceit enough to think so."

"*Me* conceited? Anything but that. Come now, Kitty, for whom were you crying? I must know."

"Please let me go, Mr. Yates," said Kitty, with an effort at dignity.

"Dick is my name, Kit."

"Well, mine is not Kit."

"You're quite right. Now that you mention it, I will call you Kitty, which is much prettier than the abbreviation."

"I did not 'mention it.' Please let me go. Nobody has the right to call me anything but Miss Bartlett; that is, *you* haven't, anyhow."

"Well, Kitty, don't you think it is about time to give somebody the right? Why won't you look up at me, so that I can tell for sure whether I should have accused you of crying? Look up,—Miss Bartlett."

"Please let me go, Mr. Yates. Mother will be here in a minute."

"Mother is a wise and thoughtful woman. We'll risk mother. Besides, I'm not in the least afraid of her, and I don't believe you are. I think she is at this moment giving poor Mr. Stoliker a piece of her mind; otherwise, I imagine, he would have followed me. I saw it in his eye."

"I hate that man," said Kitty inconsequently.

"I like him, because he brought me here, even if I was handcuffed. Kitty, why don't you look up at me? Are you afraid?"

"What should I be afraid of?" asked Kitty, giving him one swift glance from her pretty blue eyes. "Not of you, I hope."

"Well, Kitty, I sincerely hope not. Now, Miss Bartlett, do you know why I came out here?"

"For something more to eat, very likely," said the girl mischievously.

"Oh, I say, that, to a man in captivity, is both cruel and unkind. Besides, I had a first-rate breakfast, thank you. No such motive drew me into the kitchen. But I will tell you. You shall have it from my own lips. *That* was the reason."

He suited the action to the word, and kissed her before she knew what was about to happen. At least, Yates, with all his experience, thought he had taken her unawares. Men often make mistakes in little matters of this kind. Kitty pushed him with apparent indignation from her, but she

did not strike him across the face, as she had done before, when he merely attempted what he had now accomplished. Perhaps this was because she had been taken so completely by surprise.

"I shall call my mother," she threatened.

"Oh no, you won't. Besides, she wouldn't come." Then this frivolous young man began to sing, in a low voice, the flippant refrain, "Here's to the girl that gets a kiss, and runs and tells her mother," ending with the wish, that she should live and die an old maid and never get another. Kitty should not have smiled, but she did; she should have rebuked his levity, but she didn't.

"It is about the great and disastrous consequences of living and dying an old maid that I want to speak to you. I have a plan for the prevention of such a catastrophe, and I would like to get your approval of it."

Yates had released the girl, partly because she had wrenched herself away from him, and partly because he heard a movement in the dining-room, and expected the entrance of Stoliker or some of the others. Miss Kitty stood with her back to the table, her eyes fixed on a spring flower, which she had unconsciously taken from a vase standing on the window-ledge. She smoothed the petals this way and that, and seemed so interested in botanical investigation, that Yates wondered whether she was paying attention to what he was

saying or not. What his plan might have been, can only be guessed; for the fates ordained that they should be interrupted at this critical moment, by the one person on earth who could make Yates's tongue falter.

The outer door to the kitchen burst open, and Margaret Howard stood on the threshold, her lovely face aflame with indignation, and her dark hair down over her shoulders, forming a picture of beauty that fairly took Yates's breath away. She did not notice him.

"O Kitty," she cried, "those wretches have stolen all our horses! Is your father here?"

"What wretches?" asked Kitty, ignoring the question, and startled by the sudden advent of her friend.

"The Fenians. They have taken all the horses that were in the fields, and your horses as well. So I ran over to tell you."

"Have they taken your own horse too?"

"No. I always keep Gipsy in the stable. The thieves did not come near the house. Oh, Mr. Yates!—I did not see you." And Margaret's hand, with the unconscious vanity of a woman, sought her dishevelled hair, which Yates thought too becoming ever to be put in order again.

Margaret reddened as she realised, from Kitty's evident embarrassment, that she had impulsively broken in upon a conference of two.

"I must tell your father about it," she said hurriedly, and, before Yates could open the door, she had done so for herself. Again she was taken aback, to see so many sitting round the table.

There was a moment's silence between the two in the kitchen, but the spell was broken.

"I—I don't suppose there will be any trouble about getting back the horses," said Yates hesitatingly. "If you lose them, the Government will have to pay.

"I presume so," answered Kitty coldly; then, "Excuse me, Mr. Yates; I mustn't stay here any longer." So saying, she followed Margaret into the other room.

Yates drew a long breath of relief. All his old difficulties of preference had arisen when the outer door burst open. He felt that he had had a narrow escape, and began to wonder if he had really committed himself. Then the fear swept over him, that Margaret might have noticed her friend's evident confusion, and surmised its cause. He wondered whether this would help him or hurt him with Margaret, if he finally made up his mind to favour her with his serious attentions. Still, he reflected that, after all, they were both country girls, and would no doubt be only too eager to accept a chance to live in New York. Thus his mind gradually resumed its normal state of self-confidence; and he argued, that whatever Margaret's

suspicions were, they could not but make him more precious in her eyes. He knew of instances where the very danger of losing a man had turned a woman's wavering mind entirely in the man's favour. When he had reached this point, the door from the dining-room opened, and Stoliker appeared.

"We are waiting for you," said the constable.

"All right. I am ready."

As he entered the room, he saw the two girls standing together talking earnestly.

"I wish I was a constable for twenty-four hours," cried Mrs. Bartlett. "I would be hunting horse-thieves, instead of handcuffing innocent men."

"Come along," said the impassive Stoliker, taking the handcuffs from his pocket.

"If you three men," continued Mrs. Bartlett, "cannot take those two to camp, or to jail, or anywhere else, without handcuffing them, I'll go along with you myself and protect you, and see that they don't escape. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Sam Stoliker, if you have any manhood about you—which I doubt."

"I must do my duty."

The professor rose from his chair. "Mr. Stoliker," he said, with determination, "my friend and myself will go with you quietly. We will make no attempt to escape, as we have done nothing to make us fear investigation. But I give you fair warning,

that if you attempt to put a handcuff on my wrist again I will smash you."

A cry of terror from one of the girls, at the prospect of a fight, caused the professor to realise where he was. He turned to them and said, in a contrite voice—

"Oh! I forgot you were here. I sincerely beg your pardon."

Margaret, with blazing eyes, cried—

"Don't beg my pardon, but—smash him."

Then a consciousness of what she had said overcame her, and the excited girl hid her blushing face on her friend's shoulder, while Kitty lovingly stroked her dark, tangled hair.

Renmark took a step towards them, and stopped. Yates, with his usual quickness, came to the rescue, and his cheery voice relieved the tension of the situation.

"Come, come, Stoliker, don't be an idiot. I do not object in the least to the handcuffs; and if you are dying to handcuff somebody, handcuff me. It hasn't struck your luminous mind that you have not the first tittle of evidence against my friend, and that, even if I were the greatest criminal in America, the fact of his being with me is no crime. The truth is, Stoliker, that I wouldn't be in your shoes for a good many dollars. You talk a great deal about doing your duty, but you have exceeded it in the case of the professor. I hope you have no

property; for the professor can, if he likes, make you pay sweetly for putting the handcuffs on him without a warrant, or even without one jot of evidence. What is the penalty for false arrest, Hiram?" continued Yates, suddenly appealing to the old man. "I think it is a thousand dollars."

Hiram said gloomily that he didn't know. Stoliker was hit on a tender spot, for he owned a farm.

"Better apologise to the professor and let us get along. Good-bye, all. Mrs. Bartlett, that breakfast was the very best I ever tasted."

The good woman smiled, and shook hands with him.

"Good-bye, Mr. Yates; and I hope you will soon come back to have another."

Stoliker slipped the handcuffs into his pocket again, and mounted his horse. The girls, from the verandah, watched the procession move up the dusty road. They were silent, and had even forgotten the exciting event of the stealing of the horses.

CHAPTER XVII

WHEN the two prisoners, with their three captors, came in sight of the Canadian volunteers, they beheld a scene which was much more military than the Fenian camp. They were promptly halted and questioned by a picket, before coming to the main body; the sentry knew enough not to shoot until he had asked for the countersign. Passing the picket, they came in full view of the Canadian force, the men of which looked very spick and span, in uniforms which seemed painfully new in the clear light of the fair June morning. The guns, topped by a bristle of bayonets which glittered as the rising sun shone on them, were stacked with neat precision here and there. The men were preparing their breakfast, and a temporary halt had been called for that purpose. The volunteers were scattered by the side of the road and in the fields. Renmark recognised the colours of the regiment from his own city, and noticed that there was with it a company that was strange to him. Although led to them a prisoner, he felt a glowing pride in the

regiment and their trim appearance,—a pride that was both national and civic. He instinctively held himself more erect as he approached.

"Renmark," said Yates, looking at him with a smile, "you are making a thoroughly British mistake."

"What do you mean? I haven't spoken."

"No, but I see it in your eye. You are underestimating the enemy. You think this pretty company is going to walk over that body of unkempt tramps we saw in the woods this morning."

"I do indeed, if the tramps wait to be walked over—which I very much doubt."

"That's just where you make a mistake. Most of these are raw boys, who know all that can be learned of war on a cricket-field. They will be the worst-whipped set of young fellows, before night, that this part of the country has ever seen. Wait till they see one of their comrades fall, with the blood gushing out of a wound in his breast. If they don't turn and run, then I'm a Dutchman. I've seen raw recruits before. They should have a company of older men here who have seen service, to steady them. The fellows we saw this morning were sleeping like logs, in the damp woods, as we stepped over them. They are veterans. What will be but a mere skirmish to them, will seem to these boys the most awful tragedy that ever

happened. Why, many of them look as if they might be university lads."

"They are," said Renmark, with a pang of anguish.

"Well, I can't see what your stupid Government means by sending them here alone. They should have at least one company of regulars with them."

"Probably the regulars are on the way."

"Perhaps; but they will have to put in an appearance mighty sudden, or the fight will be over. If these boys are not in a hurry with their meal, the Fenians will be upon them before they know it. If there is to be a fight, it will be before a very few hours—before one hour passes perhaps; and you are going to see a miniature Bull Run."

Some of the volunteers crowded around the in-comers, eagerly inquiring for news of the enemy. The Fenians had taken the precaution to cut all the telegraph-wires leading out of Fort Erie, and hence those in command of the companies did not even know that the enemy had left that locality. They were now on their way to a point where they were to meet Colonel Peacocke's force of regulars, —a point which they were destined never to reach. Stoliker sought an officer, and delivered up his prisoners, together with the incriminating paper that Yates had handed to him. The officer's decision was short and sharp, as military decisions are generally supposed to be. He ordered the constable to take both the prisoners and put

them in jail at Port Colborne. There was no time now for an inquiry into the case; that could come afterwards; and so long as the men were safe in jail, everything would be all right. To this the constable mildly interposed two objections. In the first place, he said, he was with the volunteers, not in his capacity as constable, but in the position of guide and man who knew the country. In the second place, there was no jail at Port Colborne.

"Where is the nearest jail?"

"The jail of the county is at Welland, the county town," replied the constable.

"Very well; take them there."

"But I am here as guide," repeated Stoliker.

The officer hesitated for a moment. "You haven't handcuffs with you, I presume?"

"Yes, I have," said Stoliker, producing the implements."

"Well, then, handcuff them together, and I will send one of the company over to Welland with them. How far is it across country?"

Stoliker told him.

The officer called one of the volunteers, and said to him—

"You are to make your way across country to Welland, and deliver these men up to the jailer there. They will be handcuffed together, but you take a revolver with you, and if they give you any trouble, shoot them."

The volunteer reddened, and drew himself up. "I am not a policeman," he said. "I am a soldier."

"Very well, then, your first duty as a soldier is to obey orders. I order you to take these men to Welland."

The volunteers had crowded around as this discussion went on, and a murmur rose among them at the order of the officer. They evidently sympathised with their comrade's objection to the duties of a policeman. One of them made his way through the crowd, and cried—

"Hello! this is the professor. This is Mr. Renmark. He's no Fenian." Two or three more of the university students recognised Renmark, and, pushing up to him, greeted him warmly. He was evidently a favourite with his class. Among others, young Howard pressed forward.

"It is nonsense," he cried, "talking about sending Professor Renmark to jail. He is no more a Fenian than Governor-General Monck. We'll all go bail for the professor."

The officer wavered. "If you know him," he said, "that is a different matter. But this other man has a letter from the commander of the Fenians, recommending him to the consideration of all friends of the Fenian cause. I can't let him go free."

"Are you the chief in command here?" asked Renmark.

"No, I am not."

"Mr. Yates is a friend of mine, who is here with me on his vacation. He is a New York journalist, and has nothing in common with the invaders. If you insist on sending him to Welland, I must demand that we be taken before the officer in command. In any case, he and I stand or fall together. I am exactly as guilty or innocent as he is."

"We can't bother the colonel about every triviality."

"A man's liberty is no triviality. What in the name of common sense are you fighting for, but liberty?"

"Thanks, Renmark, thanks," said Yates; "but I don't care to see the colonel, and I shall welcome Welland jail. I am tired of all this bother. I came here for rest and quiet, and I am going to have them, if I have to go to jail for them. I'm coming reluctantly to the belief that jail's the most comfortable place in Canada, anyhow."

"But this is an outrage," cried the professor indignantly.

"Of course it is," replied Yates wearily; "but the woods are full of them. There's always outrages going on, especially in so-called free countries; therefore one more or less won't make much difference. Come, officer, who's going to take me to Welland? or shall I have to go by myself? I'm a

Fenian from 'way back, and came here especially to overturn the throne and take it home with me. For heaven's sake, know your own mind one way or other, and let us end this conference."

The officer was wroth. He speedily gave the order to Stoliker to handcuff the prisoner to himself, and deliver him to the jailer at Welland.

"But I want assistance," objected Stoliker. "The prisoner is a bigger man than I am." The volunteers laughed as Stoliker mentioned this self-evident fact.

"If anyone likes to go with you, he can go. I shall give no orders.

No one volunteered to accompany the constable.

"Take this revolver with you," continued the officer, "and if he attempts to escape, shoot him. Besides, you know the way to Welland, so I can't send anybody in your place, even if I wanted to."

"Howard knows the way," persisted Stoliker. That young man spoke up with great indignation: "Yes, but Howard isn't constable, and Stoliker is. I'm not going."

Renmark went up to his friend.

"Who's acting foolishly now, Yates?" he said. "Why don't you insist on seeing the colonel? The chances are ten to one that you would be allowed off."

"Don't make any mistake. The colonel will very likely be some fussy individual who magnifies

his own importance, and who will send a squad of volunteers to escort me, and I want to avoid that. These officers always stick by each other: they're bound to. I want to go alone with Stoliker. I have a score to settle with him."

"Now, don't do anything rash. You've done nothing so far; but if you assault an officer of the law, that will be a different matter."

"Satan reproving sin. Who prevented you from hitting Stoliker a short time since?"

"Well, I was wrong then. You are wrong now."

"See, here, Renny," whispered Yates, "you get back to the tent, and see that everything's all right. I'll be with you in an hour or so. Don't look so frightened. I won't hurt Stoliker. But I want to see this fight, and I won't get there if the colonel sends an escort. I'm going to use Stoliker as a shield, when the bullets begin flying."

The bugles sounded for the troops to fall in, and Stoliker very reluctantly attached one clasp of the handcuff around his own left wrist, while he snapped the other on the right wrist of Yates, who embarrassed him with kindly assistance. The two manacled men disappeared down the road, while the volunteers rapidly fell in, to continue their morning's march.

Young Howard beckoned to the professor, from his place in the ranks. "I say, professor, how did you happen to be down this way?"

"I have been camping out here for a week or more with Yates, who is an old schoolfellow of mine."

"What a shame, to have him led off in that way! But he seemed to rather like the idea. Jolly fellow, I should say. How I wish I had known you were in this neighbourhood. My folks live near here. They would only have been too glad to be of assistance to you."

"They have been of assistance to me, and exceedingly kind as well."

"What? You know them? All of them? Have you met Margaret?"

"Yes," said the professor slowly, but his glance fell as it encountered the eager eyes of the youth. It was evident that Margaret was the brother's favourite.

"Fall back, there," cried the officer to Renmark.

"May I march along with them? or can you give me a gun, and let me take part?"

"No," said the officer, with some hauteur; "this is no place for civilians." Again the professor smiled, as he reflected that the whole company, as far as martial experience went, were merely civilians dressed in uniform; but he became grave again, when he remembered Yates's ominous prediction regarding them.

"I say, Mr. Renmark," cried young Howard, as the company moved off, "if you see any of them,

don't tell them I'm here,—especially Margaret. It might make them uneasy. I'll get leave when this is over, and drop in on them."

The boy spoke with the hopeful confidence of youth, and had evidently no premonition of how his appointment would be kept. Renmark left the road, and struck across country in the direction of the tent.

Meanwhile, two men were tramping steadily along the dusty road towards Welland: the captor moody and silent, the prisoner talkative and entertaining, indeed Yates's conversation often went beyond entertainment, and became, at times, instructive. He discussed the affairs of both countries, showed a way out of all political difficulties, gave reasons for the practical use of common sense in every emergency, passed opinions on the methods of agriculture adopted in various parts of the country, told stories of the war, gave instances of men in captivity murdering those who were in charge of them, deduced from these anecdotes the foolishness of resisting lawful authority lawfully exercised, and, in general, showed that he was a man who respected power and the exercise thereof. Suddenly branching to more practical matters, he exclaimed—

"Say, Stoliker, how many taverns are there between here and Welland?"

Stoliker had never counted them.

"Well, that's encouraging, anyhow. If there are so many that it requires an effort of the memory to enumerate them, we will likely have something to drink before long."

"I never drink while on duty," said Stoliker curtly.

"Oh, well, don't apologise for it. Every man has his failings. I'll be only too happy to give you some instructions. I have acquired the useful practice of being able to drink both on and off duty. Anything can be done, Stoliker, if you give your mind to it. I don't believe in the word 'can't,' either with or without the mark of elision."

Stoliker did not answer, and Yates yawned wearily.

"I wish you would hire a rig, constable. I'm tired of walking. I've been on my feet ever since three this morning."

"I have no authority to hire a buggy."

"But what do you do when a prisoner refuses to move?"

"I make him move," said Stoliker shortly.

"Ah, I see. That's a good plan, and saves bills at the livery-stable."

They came to a tempting bank by the roadside, when Yates cried—

"Let's sit down and have a rest. I'm done out. The sun is hot, and the road dusty. You can let me have half an hour; the day's young yet."

"I'll let you have fifteen minutes."

They sat down together. "I wish a team would come along," said Yates, with a sigh.

"No chance of a team, with most of the horses in the neighbourhood stolen, and the troops on the roads."

"That's so," assented Yates sleepily.

He was evidently tired out, for his chin dropped on his breast, and his eyes closed. His breathing came soft and regular, and his body leaned towards the constable, who sat bolt upright. Yates's left arm fell across the knees of Stoliker, and he leaned more and more heavily against him. The constable did not know whether he was shamming or not, but he took no risks. He kept his grasp firm on the butt of the revolver. Yet, he reflected, Yates could surely not meditate an attempt on his weapon, for he had, a few minutes before, told him a story about a prisoner who escaped in exactly that way. Stoliker was suspicious of the good intentions of the man he had in charge; he was altogether too polite and good-natured; and, besides, the constable dumbly felt that the prisoner was a much cleverer man than he.

"Here, sit up," he said gruffly. "I'm not paid to carry you, you know."

"What's that? What's that? What's that?" cried Yates rapidly, blinking his eyes and straightening up. "Oh, it's only you, Stoliker. I thought it was my friend Renmark. Have I been asleep?"

"Either that or pretending—I don't know which, and I don't care."

"Oh! I must have been pretending," answered Yates drowsily; "I can't have dropped asleep. How long have we been here?"

"About five minutes."

"All right." And Yates's head began to droop again.

This time the constable felt no doubt about it. No man could imitate sleep so well. Several times Yates nearly fell forward, and each time saved himself, with the usual luck of a sleeper or a drunkard. Nevertheless, Stoliker never took his hand from his revolver. Suddenly, with a greater lurch than usual, Yates pitched head first down the bank, carrying the constable with him. The steel band of the handcuff nipped the wrist of Stoliker, who, with an oath and a cry of pain, instinctively grasped the links between with his right hand, to save his wrist. Like a cat, Yates was upon him, showing marvellous agility for a man who had just tumbled in a heap. The next instant he held aloft the revolver, crying triumphantly,—

"How's that, umpire? Out, I expect."

The constable, with set teeth, still rubbed his wounded wrist, realising the hopelessness of a struggle.

"Now, Stoliker," said Yates, pointing the pistol at him, "what have you to say before I fire?"

"Nothing," answered the constable, "except that you will be hanged at Welland, instead of staying a few days in jail."

Yates laughed. "That's not bad, Stoliker; and I really believe there's some grit in you, if you *are* a man-catcher. Still, you were not in very much danger, as perhaps you knew. Now, if you should want this pistol again, just watch where it alights." And Yates, taking the weapon by the muzzle, tossed it as far as he could into the field.

Stoliker watched its flight intently, then, putting his hand into his pocket, he took out some small object and flung it as nearly as he could to the spot where the revolver fell.

"Is that how you mark the place?" asked Yates; or is it some spell that will enable you to find the pistol?"

"Neither," answered the constable quietly. "It is the key of the handcuffs. The duplicate is at Welland."

Yates whistled a prolonged note, and looked with admiration at the little man. He saw the hopelessness of the situation. If he attempted to search for the key in the long grass, the chances were ten to one that Stoliker would stumble on the pistol before Yates found the key, in which case the reporter would be once more at the mercy of the law.

"Stoliker, you're evidently fonder of my company than I am of yours. That wasn't a bad strategic

move on your part, but it may cause you some personal inconvenience before I get these handcuffs filed off. I'm not going to Welland this trip, as you may be disappointed to learn. I have gone with you as far as I intend to. You will now come with me."

"I shall not move," replied the constable firmly.

"Very well, stay there," said Yates, twisting his hand around so as to grasp the chain that joined the cuffs. Getting a firm grip, he walked up the road, down which they had tramped a few minutes before. Stoliker set his teeth and tried to hold his ground, but was forced to follow. Nothing was said by either, until several hundred yards were thus traversed. Then Yates stopped.

"Having now demonstrated to you the fact that you must accompany me, I hope you will show yourself a sensible man, Stoliker, and come with me quietly. It will be less exhausting for both of us, and all the same in the end. You can do nothing until you get help. I am going to see the fight, which I feel sure will be a brief one, so I don't want to lose any more time in getting back. In order to avoid meeting people, and having me explain to them that you are my prisoner, I propose we go through the fields."

One difference between a fool and a wise man is, that the wise man always accepts the inevitable. The constable was wise. The two crossed the rail

fence into the fields, and walked along peaceably together—Stoliker silent as usual, with the grim confidence of a man who is certain of ultimate success, who has the nation behind him, with all its machinery working in his favour; Yates talkative, argumentative, and instructive by turns, occasionally breaking forth into song when the unresponsiveness of the other rendered conversation difficult.

"Stoliker, how supremely lovely and quiet and restful are the silent, scented, spreading fields! How soothing to a spirit tired of the city's din is this solitude, broken only by the singing of the birds and the drowsy droning of the bee, erroneously termed 'bumble'! The green fields, the shady trees, the sweet freshness of the summer air, untainted by city smoke, and over all the eternal serenity of the blue and cloudless sky—how can human spite and human passion exist in such a paradise? Does it all not make you feel as if you were an innocent child again, with motives pure and conscience white?"

If Stoliker felt like an innocent child, he did not look it. With clouded brow he eagerly scanned the empty fields, hoping for help. But although the constable made no reply, there was an answer that electrified Yates, and put all thought of the beauty of the country out of his mind. The dull report of a musket, far in front of them, suddenly broke the silence, followed by several scattering shots, and

then the roar of a volley. This was sharply answered by the ring of rifles to the right. With an oath, Yates broke into a run.

"They're at it!" he cried, "and all on account of your confounded obstinacy I shall miss the whole show. The Fenians have opened fire, and the Canadians have not been long in replying."

The din of the firing now became incessant. The veteran in Yates was aroused. He was like an old war-horse, who again feels the intoxicating smell of battle-smoke. The lunacy of gunpowder shone in his gleaming eye.

"Come on, you loitering idiot!" he cried to the constable, who had difficulty in keeping pace with him; "come on, or, by the gods, I'll break your wrist across a fence rail, and tear this brutal iron from it."

The savage face of the prisoner was transformed with the passion of war, and, for the first time that day, Stoliker quailed before the insane glare of his eyes. But, if he was afraid, he did not show his fear to Yates.

"Come on, *you*!" he shouted, springing ahead, and giving a twist to the handcuffs, well known to those who have to deal with refractory criminals. "I am as eager to see the fight as you are."

The sharp pain brought Yates to his senses again. He laughed, and said, "That's the ticket.

I'm with you. Perhaps you would not be in such a hurry if you knew that I am going into the thick of the fight, and intend to use you as a shield from the bullets."

"That's all right," answered the little constable, panting. "Two sides are firing. I'll shield you on one side, and you'll have to shield me on the other."

Again Yates laughed, and they ran silently together. Avoiding the houses, they came out at the Ridge Road. The smoke rolled up above the trees, showing where the battle was going on some distance beyond. Yates made the constable cross the fence and the road, and take to the fields again, bringing him around behind Bartlett's house and barn. No one was visible near the house except Kitty Bartlett, who stood at the back watching, with pale and anxious face, the rolling smoke, now and then covering her ears with her hands, as the sound of an extra loud volley assailed them. Stoliker lifted up his voice and shouted for help.

"If you do that again," cried Yates, clutching him by the throat, "I'll choke you."

But he did not need to do it again. The girl heard the cry, turned with a frightened look, and was about to fly into the house, when she recognised the two. Then she came towards them. Yates took his hand away from the constable's throat.

"Where is your father or your brother?" demanded the constable.

"I don't know."

"Where is your mother?"

"She is over with Mrs. Howard, who is ill."

"Are you all alone?"

"Yes."

"Then, I command you, in the name of the Queen, to give no assistance to this prisoner, but to do as I tell you."

"And I command you, in the name of the President," cried Yates, "to keep your mouth shut, and not to address a lady like that. Kitty," he continued in a milder tone, "could you tell me where to get a file, so that I may cut these wrist-ornaments? Don't you get it. You are to do nothing. Just indicate where the file is. The law mustn't have any hold on you, as it seems to have on me."

"Why don't you make him unlock them?" asked Kitty.

"Because the villain threw away the key in the fields."

"He couldn't have done that."

The constable caught his breath.

"But he did. I saw him."

"And I saw him unlock them at breakfast. The key was on the end of his watch-chain. He hasn't thrown that away."

She made a move to take out his watch-chain, but Yates stopped her.

"Don't touch him. I'm playing a lone hand here." He jerked out the chain, and the real key dangled from it.

"Well, Stoliker," he said, "I don't know which to admire most—your cleverness and pluck, my stupidity, or Miss Bartlett's acuteness of observation. Can we get into the barn, Kitty?"

"Yes; but you mustn't hurt him."

"No fear. I think too much of him. Don't you come in. I'll be out in a moment, like the medium from a spiritualistic dark cabinet."

Entering the barn, Yates forced the constable up against the square oaken post which was part of the framework of the building, and which formed one side of the perpendicular ladder that led to the top of the hay-mow.

"Now, Stoliker," he said solemnly, "you realise, of course, that I don't want to hurt you; yet you also realise that I *must* hurt you if you attempt any tricks. I can't take any risks, please remember that; and recollect that, by the time you are free again, I shall be in the State of New York. So don't compel me to smash your head against this post." He, with some trouble, unlocked the clasp on his own wrist; then, drawing Stoliker's right hand around the post, he snapped the same clasp on the constable's hitherto free wrist. The unfor-

tunate man, with his cheek against the oak, was in the comical position of lovingly embracing the post.

"I'll get you a chair from the kitchen, so that you will be more comfortable,—unless, like Samson, you can pull down the supports. Then I must bid you good-bye."

Yates went out to the girl, who was waiting for him.

"I want to borrow a kitchen chair, Kitty," he said, "so that poor Stoliker will get a rest."

They walked towards the house. Yates noticed that the firing had ceased, except a desultory shot here and there across the country.

"I shall have to retreat over the border as quickly as I can," he continued. "This country is getting too hot for me."

"You are much safer here," said the girl, with downcast eyes. "A man has brought the news that the United States gunboats are sailing up and down the river, making prisoners of all who attempt to cross from this side."

"You don't say! Well, I might have known that. Then, what am I to do with Stoliker? I can't keep him tied up here. Yet the moment he gets loose, I'm done for."

"Perhaps mother could persuade him not to do anything more. Shall I go for her?"

"I don't think it would be any use. Stoliker's a stubborn animal. He has suffered too much at

my hands to be in a forgiving mood. We'll bring him a chair, anyhow, and see the effect of kindness on him."

When the chair was placed at Stoliker's disposal, he sat down upon it, still hugging the post with an enforced fervency that, in spite of the solemnity of the occasion, nearly made Kitty laugh, and lit up her eyes with the mischievousness that had always delighted Yates.

"How long am I to be kept here?" asked the constable.

"Oh, not long," answered Yates cheerily; "not a moment longer than is necessary. I'll telegraph when I'm safe in New York State: so you won't be here more than a day or two."

This assurance did not appear to bring much comfort to Stoliker.

"Look here," he said; "I guess I know as well as the next man when I'm beaten. I have been thinking all this over. I am under the sheriff's orders, and not under the orders of that officer. I don't believe you've done anything, anyhow, or you wouldn't have acted quite the way you did. If the sheriff had sent me, it would have been different. As it is, if you unlock those cuffs, I'll give you my word I'll do nothing more unless I'm ordered to. Like as not, they've forgotten all about you by this time; and there's nothing on record, anyhow."

"Do you mean it? Will you act square?"

"Certainly, I'll act square. I don't suppose you doubt that. I didn't ask any favours before, and I did what I could to hold you."

"Enough said," cried Yates. "I'll risk it."

Stoliker stretched his arms wearily above his head when he was released.

"I wonder," he said, now that Kitty was gone, "if there is anything to eat in the house?"

"Shake!" cried Yates, holding out his hand to him. "Another great and mutual sentiment unites us, Stoliker. Let us go and see."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE man who wanted to see the fight did not see it, and the man who did not want to see it, saw it. Yates arrived on the field of conflict when all was over; Renmark found the battle raging around him before he realised that things had reached a crisis.

When Yates reached the tent, he found it empty and torn by bullets. The fortunes of war had smashed the jar, and the fragments were strewn before the entrance, probably by some disappointed man who had tried to sample the contents and had found nothing.

"Hang it all," said Yates to himself, "I wonder what the five assistants that the *Argus* sent me have done with themselves? If they are with the Fenians, beating a retreat—or worse, if they are captured by the Canadians—they won't be able to get an account of this scrimmage through to the paper. Now, this is evidently the biggest item of the year—it's international, by George! It may involve England and the United States in a war, if both sides are not extra mild and cautious. I

can't run the chance of the paper being left in the lurch. Let me think a minute. Is it my tip to follow the Canadians or the Fenians? I wonder which is running the faster? My men are evidently with the Fenians, if they were on the ground at all. If I go after the Irish Republic, I shall run the risk of duplicating things; but if I follow the Canadians, they may put me under arrest. Then we have more Fenian sympathisers among our readers than Canadians, so the account from the invasion side of the fence will be the more popular. Yet a Canadian version would be a good thing, if I were sure the rest of the boys got in their work, and the chances are that the other papers won't have any reporters among the Kanucks. Heavens! What is a man to do? I'll toss up for it. Heads, the Fenians."

He spun the coin in the air, and caught it.

"Heads it is! The Fenians are my victims. I'm camping on their trail, anyhow. Besides, it's safer than following the Canadians, even though Stoliker has got my pass."

Tired as he was, he stepped briskly through the forest. The scent of a big item was in his nostrils, and it stimulated him like champagne. What was temporary loss of sleep, compared to the joy of defeating the opposition press?

A blind man might have followed the trail of the retreating army. They had thrown away, as

they passed through the woods, every article that impeded their progress. Once he came on a man lying with his face in the dead leaves. He turned him over.

"His troubles are past, poor devil," said Yates, as he pushed on.

"Halt! Throw up your hands," came a cry from in front of him.

Yates saw no one, but he promptly threw up his hands, being an adaptable man.

"What's the trouble?" he shouted. "I'm retreating too."

"Then retreat five steps farther. I'll count the steps. One."

Yates strode one step forward, and then saw that a man behind a tree was covering him with a gun. The next step revealed a second captor, with a huge upraised hammer, like a Hercules with his club. Both men had blackened faces, and resembled thoroughly disreputable fiends of the forest. Seated on the ground, in a semicircle, were half a dozen dejected prisoners. The man with the gun swore fearfully, but his comrade with the hammer was silent.

"Come," said the marksman, "you blank scoundrel, and take a seat with your fellow-scoundrels. If you attempt to run, blank, blank you, I'll fill you full of buckshot."

"Oh, I'm not going to run, Sandy," cried Yates,

recognising him. "Why should I? I've always enjoyed your company, and Macdonald's. How are you, Mac? Is this a little private raid of your own? For which side are you fighting? And I say, Sandy, what's the weight of that old-fashioned bar of iron you have in your hands? I'd like to decide a bet. Let me heft it, as you said in the shop."

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said Sandy in a disappointed tone, lowering his gun. "I thought we had raked in another of them. The old man and I want to make it an even dozen."

"Well, I don't think you'll capture any more. I saw nobody as I came through the woods. What are you going to do with this crowd?"

"Brain 'em," said Macdonald laconically, speaking for the first time. Then he added reluctantly, "If any of 'em tries to escape."

The prisoners were all evidently too tired and despondent to make any attempt at regaining their liberty. Sandy winked over Macdonald's shoulder at Yates, and by a slight side movement of his head he seemed to indicate that he would like to have some private conversation with the newspaper man.

"I'm not your prisoner, am I?" asked Yates.

"No," said Macdonald. "You may go if you like, but not in the direction the Fenians have gone."

"I guess I won't need to go any farther, if you will give me permission to interview your prisoners. I merely want to get some points about the fight."

"That's all right," said the blacksmith, "as long as you don't try to help them. If you do, I warn you there will be trouble."

Yates followed Sandy into the depths of the forest, out of hearing of the others, leaving Macdonald and his sledge-hammer on guard.

When at a safe distance, Sandy stopped and rested his arms on his gun, in a Path-finder attitude.

"Say," he began anxiously, "you haven't got some powder and shot on you by any chance?"

"Not an ounce. Haven't you any ammunition?"

"No, and haven't had all through the fight. You see, we left the shop in such a hurry, we never thought about powder and ball. As soon as a man on horseback came by shouting that there was a fight on, the old man he grabbed his sledge, and I took this gun that had been left at the shop for repairs, and off we started. I'm not sure that it would shoot if I had ammunition, but I'd like to try. I've scared some of them Fee-neens nigh to death with it, but I was always afraid one of them would pull a real gun on me, and then I don't know just what I'd a-done."

Sandy sighed, and added, with the air of a man who saw his mistake but was somewhat loth to acknowledge it, "Next battle there is, you won't

find me in it with a lame gun and no powder. I'd sooner have the old man's sledge. It don't miss fire." His eye brightened as he thought of Macdonald. "Say," he continued, with a jerk of his head back over his shoulder, "the boss is on the warpath in great style, ain't he?"

"He is," said Yates, "but, for that matter, so are you. You can swear nearly as well as Macdonald himself. When did you take to it?"

"Oh, well, you see," said Sandy apologetically, "it don't come as natural to me as chewing, but then, somebody's got to swear. The old man's converted, you know."

"Ah, hasn't he backslid yet?"

"No, he hasn't. I was afraid this scrimmage was going to do for him, but it didn't; and now, I think that if somebody near by does a little cussing, not that anyone can cuss like the boss, he'll pull through. I think he'll stick this time. You'd ought to have seen him wading into them d—d Fee-neens, swinging his sledge, and singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." Then, with me to chip in a cuss word now and again when things got hot, he pulled through the day without ripping an oath. I tell you, it was a sight. He bowled 'em over like nine-pins. You ought to a-been there."

"Yes," said Yates regretfully. "I missed it, all on account of that accursed Stoliker. Well, there's no use crying over spilt milk, but I'll tell you one

thing, Sandy; although I have no ammunition, I'll let you know what I have got. I have, in my pocket, one of the best plugs of tobacco that you ever put your teeth into."

Sandy's eyes glittered. "Bless you!" was all he could say, as he bit off a corner of the offered plug.

"You see, Sandy, there are compensations in this life after all; I thought you were out."

"I haven't had a bite all day. That's the trouble with leaving in a hurry."

"Well, you may keep that plug, with my regards. Now, I want to get back and interview those fellows. There's no time to be lost."

When they reached the group, Macdonald said—

"Here's a man says he knows you, Mr. Yates. He claims he is a reporter, and that you will vouch for him."

Yates strode forward, and looked anxiously at the prisoners, hoping, yet fearing, to find one of his own men there. He was a selfish man, and wanted the glory of the day to be all his own. He soon recognised one of the prisoners as Jimmy Hawkins, of the staff of a rival daily, *The New York Blade.* This was even worse than he had anticipated.

"Hello, Jimmy," he said, "how did you get here?"

"I was raked in by that adjective fool with the unwashed face."

"Whose a—fool?" cried Macdonald in wrath, and grasping his hammer. He boggled slightly as he came to the 'adjective,' but got over it safely. It was evidently a close call, but Sandy sprang to the rescue, and cursed Hawkins until even the prisoners turned pale at the torrent of profanity. Macdonald looked with sad approbation at his pupil, not knowing that he was under the stimulus of newly acquired tobacco, wondering how he had attained such proficiency in malediction; for, like all true artists, he was quite unconscious of his own merit in that direction.

"Tell this hammer-wielder that I'm no anvil. Tell him that I'm a newspaper man, and didn't come here to fight. He says that if you guarantee that I'm no Fenian, he'll let me go."

Yates sat down on a fallen log, with a frown on his brow. He liked to do a favour to a fellow-creature when the act did not inconvenience himself, but he never forgot the fact that business was business.

"I can't conscientiously tell him that, Jimmy," said Yates soothingly. "How am I to know you are not a Fenian?"

"Bosh!" cried Hawkins angrily. "Conscientiously? A lot you think of conscience when there is an item to be had."

"We none of us live up to our better nature, Jimmy," continued Yates feelingly. "We can but

do our best, which is not much. For reasons that you might fail to understand, I do not wish to run the risk of telling a lie. You appreciate my hesitation, don't you Mr. Macdonald? You would not advise me to assert a thing I was not sure of, would you?"

"Certainly not," said the blacksmith earnestly.

"You want to keep me here, because you are afraid of me," cried the indignant *Blade* man. "You know very well I'm not a Fenian."

"Excuse me, Jimmy, but I know nothing of the kind. I even suspect myself of Fenian leanings. How, then, can I be sure of you?"

"What's your game?" asked Hawkins more calmly, for he realised that he himself would not be slow to take advantage of a rival's dilemma.

"My game is to get a neat little account of this historical episode sent over the wires to the *Argus*. You see, Jimmy, this is my busy day. When the task is over, I will devote myself to your service, and will save you from being hanged, if I can; although I shall do so without prejudice, as the lawyers say, for I have always held that that will be the ultimate end of all the *Blade* staff."

"Look here, Yates, play fair. Don't run in any conscientious guff on a prisoner. You see, I have known you these many years."

"Yes, and little have you profited by a noble example. It is your knowledge of me that makes

me wonder at your expecting me to let you out of your hole without due consideration."

"Are you willing to make a bargain?"

"Always—when the balance of trade is on my side."

"Well, if you give me a fair start, I'll give you some exclusive information that you can't get otherwise."

"What is it?"

"Oh, I wasn't born yesterday, Dick."

"That is interesting information, Jimmy, but I knew it before. Haven't you something more attractive to offer?"

"Yes, I have. I have the whole account of the expedition and the fight written out, all ready to send, if I could get my clutches on a telegraph-wire. I'll hand it over to you, and allow you to read it, if you will get me out of this hole, as you call it. I'll give you permission to use the information in any way you choose, if you will extricate me, and all I ask is a fair start in the race for a telegraph-office."

Yates pondered over the proposition for some moments.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Jimmy," he finally said. "I'll buy that account from you, and give you more money than the *Blade* will. And when I get back to New York, I'll place you on the staff of the *Argus* at a higher salary than

the *Blade* gives you—taking your own word for the amount."

"What! And leave my paper in the lurch? Not likely."

"Your paper is going to be left in the lurch anyhow."

"Perhaps. But it won't be sold by me. I'll burn my copy before I will let you have a glimpse of it. That don't need to interfere with your making me an offer of a better position when we get back to New York; but while my paper depends on me, I won't go back on it."

"Just as you please, Jimmy. Perhaps I would do the same myself. I always was weak where the interests of the *Argus* were concerned. You haven't any blank paper you could lend me, Jimmy?"

"I have, but I won't lend it."

Yates took out his pencil, and pulled down his cuff.

"Now, Mac," he said, "tell me all you saw of this fight."

The blacksmith talked, and Yates listened, putting now and then a mark on his cuff. Sandy spoke occasionally, but it was mostly to tell of sledge-hammer feats, or to corroborate something the boss said. One after another, Yates interviewed the prisoners, and gathered together all the materials for that excellent full-page account "By

an eye-witness" that afterwards appeared in the columns of the *Argus*. He had a wonderful memory, and simply jotted down figures with which he did not care to burden his mind. Hawkins laughed derisively now and then at the facts they were giving Yates, but the *Argus* man said nothing, merely setting down in shorthand some notes of the information Hawkins sneered at, which Yates considered was more than likely accurate and important. When he had got all he wanted, he rose.

"Shall I send you help, Mac?" he asked.

"No," said the smith; "I think I'll take these fellows to the shop, and hold them there till called for. You can't vouch for Hawkins, then, Mr. Yates?"

"Good Heavens, no! I look on him as the most dangerous of the lot. These half-educated criminals, who have no conscientious scruples, always seem to me a greater menace to society than their more ignorant co-conspirators. Well, good-bye, Jimmy. I think you'll enjoy life down at Mac's shop. It's the best place I've struck since I've been in the district. Give my love to all the boys, when they come to gaze at you. I'll make careful inquiries into your opinions, and as soon as I am convinced that you can be set free with safety to the community, I'll drop in on you and do all I can. Meanwhile—so long."

Yates's one desire was now to reach a telegraph-office, and write his article as it was being clicked off on the machine. He had his fears about the speed of a country operator, but he dared not risk trying to get through to Buffalo in the then excited state of the country. He quickly made up his mind to go to the Bartlett place, borrow a horse, if the Fenians had not permanently made off with them all, and ride as rapidly as he could for the nearest telegraph-office. He soon reached the edge of the woods, and made his way across the fields to the house. He found young Bartlett at the barn.

"Any news of the horses yet?" was the first question he asked.

"No," said young Bartlett gloomily, "guess they've rode away with them."

"Well, I must get a horse from somewhere to ride to the telegraph-office. Where is the likeliest place to find one?"

"I don't know where you can get one, unless you steal the telegraph-boy's nag; it's in the stable now, having a feed."

"What telegraph-boy?"

"Oh, didn't you see him? He went out to the tent to look for you, and I thought he had found you."

"No, I haven't been at the tent for ever so long. Perhaps he has some news for me. I'm going to

the house to write, so send him in as soon as he gets back. Be sure you don't let him get away before I see him."

"I'll lock the stable," said young Bartlett, "and then he won't get the horse at any rate."

Yates found Kitty in the kitchen, and he looked so flurried that the girl cried anxiously—

"Are they after you again, Mr. Yates?"

"No, Kitty; I'm after them. Say, I want all the blank paper you have in the house. Anything will do, so long as it will hold a lead-pencil mark."

"A copybook — such as the children use in school?"

"Just the thing."

In less than a minute, the energetic girl had all the materials he required ready for him in the front room. Yates threw off his coat, and went to work as if he were in his own den in the *Argus* building.

"This is a —— of a vacation," he muttered to himself, as he drove his pencil at lightning speed over the surface of the paper. He took no note of the time until he had finished, then he roused himself and sprang to his feet.

"What in thunder has become of that telegraph-boy?" he cried. "Well, it doesn't matter; I'll take the horse without his permission."

He gathered up his sheets, and rushed for the kitchen. He was somewhat surprised to see the

boy sitting there, gorging himself with the good things which that kitchen always afforded.

"Hello, youngster! how long have you been here?"

"I wouldn't let him go in to disturb you while you were writing," said Kitty, the boy's mouth being too full to permit of a reply

"Ah, that was right. Now, sonny, gulp that down and come in here, I want to talk to you for a minute."

The boy followed him into the front room.

"Well, my son, I want to borrow your horse for the rest of the day."

"You can't have it," said the boy promptly.

"Can't have it? I must have it. Why, I'll take it. You don't imagine you can stop me, do you?"

The boy drew himself up, and folded his arms across his breast.

"What do you want with the horse, Mr. Yates?" he asked.

"I want to get to the nearest telegraph-office. I'll pay you well for it."

"And what am I here for?"

"Why, to eat, of course. They'll feed you high while you wait."

"Canadian telegraph-office?"

"Certainly."

"It's no good, Mr. Yates. Them Canadians couldn't telegraph all you've written in two weeks.

I know 'em," said the boy, with infinite scorn. "Besides, the Government has got hold of all the wires, and you can't get a private message through till it gets over its fright."

"By George!" cried Yates, taken aback, "I hadn't thought of that. Are you sure, boy?"

"Dead certain."

"Then, what's to be done? I must get through to Buffalo."

"You can't. United States troops won't let you. They're stopping everybody—except me," he added, drawing himself up, as if he were the one individual who stood in with the United States Government.

"Can you get this despatch through?"

"You bet. That's why I came back. I knew, as soon as I looked at you, that you would write two or three columns of telegraph; and your paper said 'spare no expense,' you remember. So says I to myself, 'I'll help Mr. Yates to spare no expense. I'll get fifty dollars from that young man, seeing I'm the only person who can get across in time.'"

"You were mighty sure of it, weren't you?"

"You just bet I was. Now, the horse is fed and ready, I'm fed and ready, and we're losing valuable time waiting for that fifty dollars."

"Suppose you meet another newspaper man who wants to get his despatch through to another paper, what will you do?"

"Charge him the same as I do you. If I meet two other newspaper men, that will be one hundred and fifty dollars; but if you want to make sure that I won't meet any more newspaper men, let us call it one hundred dollars, and I'll take the risk of the odd fifty for the ready cash; then if I meet a dozen newspaper men, I'll tell them I'm a telegraph-boy on a vacation."

"Quite so. I think you will be able to take care of yourself in a cold and callous world. Now, look here, young man, I'll trust you if you'll trust me. I'm not a travelling mint, you know. Besides, I pay by results. If you don't get this despatch through, you don't get anything. I'll give you an order for a hundred dollars, and as soon as I get to Buffalo I'll pay you the cash. I'll have to draw on the *Argus* when I get to Buffalo; if my article has appeared you get your cash, if it hasn't you're out. See?"

"Yes, I see. It won't do, Mr. Yates."

"Why won't it do?"

"Because I say it won't. This is a cash transaction. Money down, or you don't get the goods. I'll get it through all right, but if I just miss, I'm not going to lose the money."

"Very well, I'll take it to the Canadian telegraph-office."

"All right, Mr. Yates. I'm disappointed in you. I thought you were some good. You ain't got no

sense, but I wish you luck. When I was at your tent, there was a man with a hammer taking a lot of men out of the woods. When one of them sees my uniform, he sings out he'd give me twenty-five dollars to take his stuff. I said I'd see him later, and I will. Good-bye, Mr. Yates."

"Hold on there. You're a young villain. You'll end in States prison yet, but here's your money. Now, you ride like a house a-fire."

After watching the departing boy until he was out of sight, Yates, with a feeling of relief, started back to the tent. He was worried about the interview the boy had had with Hawkins, and he wondered, now that it was too late, whether after all he had not Hawkins' manuscript in his pocket. He wished he had searched him. That trouble, however, did not prevent him from sleeping like the dead, the moment he lay down in the tent.

CHAPTER XIX

THE result of the struggle was similar in effect to an American railway accident of the first class. One officer and five privates were killed on the Canadian side, one man was missing, and many were wounded. The number of the Fenians killed will probably never be known. Several were buried on the field of battle, others were taken back by O'Neill's brigade when they retreated.

Although the engagement ended as Yates had predicted, yet he was wrong in his estimate of the Canadians. Volunteers are invariably underrated by men of experience in military matters. The boys fought well, even when they saw their ensign fall dead before them. If the affair had been left entirely in their hands, the result might have been different — as was shown afterwards, when the volunteers, unimpeded by regulars, quickly put down a much more formidable rising in the North-West. But in the present case they were hampered by their dependence on the British troops, whose commander moved them with all the ponderous slowness of real war, and approached O'Neill as if

he had been approaching Napoleon. He thus managed to get in a day after the fair on every occasion, being too late for the fight at Ridgeway, and too late to capture any considerable number of the flying Fenians at Fort Erie. The campaign, on the Canadian side, was magnificently planned and wretchedly carried out. The volunteers and regulars were to meet at a point close to where the fight took place, but the British commander delayed two hours in starting, which fact the Canadian colonel did not learn until too late. These blunders culminated in a ghastly mistake on the field. The Canadian colonel ordered his men to charge across an open field, and attack the Fenian force in the woods, — a brilliant but foolish move. To the command, the volunteers gallantly responded, but against stupidity the gods are powerless. In the field, they were appalled to hear the order given to form square and receive cavalry. Even the schoolboys knew the Fenians could have no cavalry.

Having formed their square, the Canadians found themselves the helpless targets of the Fenians in the woods. If O'Neill's forces had shot with reasonable precision, they must have cut the volunteers to pieces. The latter were victorious, if they had only known it; but, in this hopeless square, panic seized them, and it was every man for himself; at the same time, the Fenians were also retreating as fast as they could. This

farce is known as the battle of Ridgeway, and would have been comical had it not been that death hovered over it. The comedy, without the tragedy, was enacted a day or two before, at a bloodless skirmish which took place near a hamlet called Waterloo, which affray is dignified in Canadian annals as the second battle of that name.

When the Canadian forces retreated, Renmark, who had watched the contest with all the helpless anxiety of a non-combatant, sharing the danger but having no influence upon the result, followed them, making a wide detour to avoid the chance shots which were still flying. He expected to come up with the volunteers on the road, but was not successful. Through various miscalculations, he did not succeed in finding them until towards evening. At first they told him that young Howard was with the company, and unhurt, but further inquiry soon disclosed the fact that he had not been seen since the fight. He was not among those who were killed or wounded, and it was nightfall before Renmark realised that opposite his name on the roll would be placed the ominous word "missing." Renmark remembered that the boy had said he would visit his home if he got leave; but no leave had been asked for. At last Renmark was convinced that young Howard was either badly wounded or dead. The possibility of his desertion the professor did not consider for a

moment, although he admitted to himself that it was hard to tell what panic of fear might come over a boy who, for the first time in his life, found bullets flying about his ears.

With a heavy heart, Renmark turned back and made his way to the fatal field. He found nothing on the Canadian side. Going over to the woods, he came across several bodies lying where they fell; but they were all those of strangers. Even in the darkness, he would have had no difficulty in recognising the volunteer uniform which he knew so well. He walked down to the Howard homestead, hoping, yet fearing, to hear the boy's voice—the voice of a deserter. Everything was silent about the house, although a light shone through an upper window, and also through one below. He paused at the gate, not knowing what to do. It was evident the boy was not here, yet how to find the father or brother, without alarming Margaret or her mother, puzzled him. As he stood there, the door opened, and he recognised Mrs. Bartlett and Margaret standing in the light. He moved away from the gate, and heard the older woman say—

"Oh, she will be all right in the morning, now that she has fallen into a nice sleep. I wouldn't disturb her to-night, if I were you. It is nothing but nervousness and fright at that horrible firing. It's all over now, thank God. Good-night, Margaret."

The good woman came through the gate, and

then ran, with all the speed of sixteen, towards her own home. Margaret stood in the doorway, listening to the retreating footsteps. She was pale and anxious, but Renmark thought he had never seen anyone so lovely; and he was startled to find that he had a most un-professor-like longing to take her in his arms and comfort her. Instead of bringing her consolation, he feared it would be his fate to add to her anxiety; and it was not until he saw she was about to close the door, that he found courage to speak.

"Margaret," he said.

The girl had never heard her name pronounced in that tone before, and the cadence of it went direct to her heart, frightening her with an unknown joy. She seemed unable to move or respond, and stood there, with wide eyes and suspended breath, gazing into the darkness. Renmark stepped into the light, and she saw his face was haggard with fatigue and anxiety.

"Margaret," he said again, "I want to speak with you a moment. Where is your brother?"

"He has gone with Mr. Bartlett to see if he can find the horses. There is something wrong," she continued, stepping down beside him. "I can see it in your face. What is it?"

"Is your father in the house?"

"Yes, but he is worried about mother. Tell me what it is. It is better to tell me."

Renmark hesitated.

"Don't keep me in suspense like this," cried the girl in a low but intense voice. "You have said too much or too little. Has anything happened to Henry?"

"No. It is about Arthur I wanted to speak. You will not be alarmed?"

"I *am* alarmed. Tell me quickly." And the girl in her excitement laid her hands imploringly on his.

"Arthur joined the volunteers in Toronto some time ago. Did you know that?"

"He never told me. I understand—I think so, but I hope not. He was in the battle to-day. Is he—has he been—hurt?"

"I don't know. I'm afraid so," said Renmark hurriedly, now that the truth had to come out; he realised, by the nervous tightening of the girl's unconscious grasp, how clumsily he was telling it. "He was with the volunteers this morning. He is not with them now. They don't know where he is. No one saw him hurt, but it is feared he was, and that he has been left behind. I have been all over the ground."

"Yes, yes?"

"But I could not find him. I came here hoping to find him."

"Take me to where the volunteers were," she sobbed. "I know what has happened. Come quickly."

"Will you not put something on your head?"

"No, no. Come at once." Then, pausing, she said, "Shall we need a lantern?"

"No; it is light enough when we get out from the shadow of the house."

Margaret ran along the road, so swiftly that Renmark had some trouble in keeping pace with her. She turned at the side-road, and sped up the gentle ascent to the spot where the volunteers had crossed it.

"Here is the place,' said Renmark.

"He could not have been hit in the field," she cried breathlessly, "for then he might have reached the house at the corner without climbing a fence. If he was badly hurt, he would have been here. Did you search this field?"

"Every bit of it. He is not here."

"Then, it must have happened after he crossed the road and the second fence. Did you see the battle?"

"Yes."

"Did the Fenians cross the field after the volunteers?"

"No; they did not leave the woods."

"Then, if he was struck, it could not have been far from the other side of the second fence. He would be the last to retreat; and that is why the others did not see him," said the girl, with confident pride in her brother's courage.

They crossed the first fence, the road, and the second fence, the girl walking ahead for a few paces. She stopped, and leaned for a moment against a tree. "It must have been about here," she said in a voice hardly audible. "Have you searched on this side?"

"Yes, for half a mile farther into the fields and woods."

"No, no—not there; but down along the fence. He knew every inch of this ground. If he were wounded here, he would at once try to reach our house. Search down along the fence. I—I cannot go."

Renmark walked along the fence, peering into the dark corners made by the zigzag of the rails; and he knew, without looking back, that Margaret, with feminine inconsistency, was following him. Suddenly she darted past him, and flung herself down in the long grass, wailing out a cry that cut Renmark like a knife.

The boy lay with his face in the grass, and his outstretched hand grasping the lower rail of the fence. He had dragged himself thus far, and reached an insurmountable obstacle.

Renmark drew the weeping girl gently away, and rapidly ran his hand over the prostrate lad. He quickly opened his tunic, and a thrill of joy passed over him as he felt the faint beating of the heart."

"He is alive," he cried. "He will get well,

Margaret." A statement somewhat premature to make on so hasty an examination.

He rose, expecting a look of gratitude from the girl he loved. He was amazed to see her eyes almost luminous in the darkness, blazing with wrath.

"When did you know he was with the volunteers?"

"This morning—early," said the professor, taken aback.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"He asked me not to do so."

"He is a mere boy. You are a man, and ought to have a man's sense. You had no right to mind what a boy said. It was my right to know, and your duty to tell me. Through your negligence and stupidity my brother has lain here all day—perhaps dying," she added, with a break in her angry voice.

"If you had known—I didn't know anything was wrong until I saw the volunteers. I have not lost a moment since."

"I should have known he was missing, without going to the volunteers."

Renmark was so amazed at the unjust accusation, from a girl whom he had made the mistake of believing to be without a temper of her own that he knew not what to say. He was, however, to have one more example of inconsistency.

"Why do you stand there doing nothing, now that I have found him?" she demanded.

It was on his tongue to say, "I stand here, because you stand there unjustly quarrelling with me," but he did not say it. Renmark was not a ready man, yet he did, for once, the right thing.

"Margaret," he said sternly, "throw down that fence."

This curt command, delivered in his most schoolmastery manner, was instantly obeyed. Such a task may seem a formidable one to set to a young woman, but it is a feat easily accomplished in some parts of America. A rail-fence lends itself readily to demolition. Margaret tossed a rail to the right, one to the left, and one to the right again, until an open gap took the place of that part of the fence. The professor examined the young soldier in the meantime, and found his leg had been broken by a musket-ball. He raised him up tenderly in his arms, and was pleased to hear a groan escape his lips. He walked through the open gap and along the road towards the house, bearing the unconscious form of his pupil. Margaret silently kept close to his side, her fingers every now and then unconsciously caressing the damp, curly locks of her brother.

"We shall have to have a doctor?" Her assertion was half an inquiry.

"Certainly."

"We must not disturb anyone in the house. It

is better that I should tell you what to do now, so that we need not talk when we reach there."

"We cannot help disturbing someone."

"I do not think it will be necessary. If you will stay with Arthur, I will go for the doctor, and no one need know."

"I will go for the doctor."

"You do not know the way. It is five or six miles. I will ride Gypsy, and will soon be back."

"But there are prowlers and stragglers all along the roads. It is not safe for you to go alone."

"It is perfectly safe. No horse that the stragglers have stolen can overtake Gypsy. Now, don't say anything more. It is best that I should go. I will run on ahead, and enter the house quietly. I will take the lamp to the room at the side, where the window opens to the floor. Carry him around there. I will be waiting for you at the gate, and will show you the way."

With that the girl was off, and Renmark carried his burden alone. She was waiting for him at the gate, and silently led the way round the house, to where the door-window opened upon the bit of lawn under an apple tree. The light streamed out upon the grass. He placed the boy gently upon the dainty bed. It needed no second glance to tell Renmark whose room he was in. It was decorated with those pretty little knick-knacks so dear to the heart of a girl in a snuggery she can call her own.

"It is not likely you will be disturbed here," she whispered, "until I come back. I will tap at the window when I come with the doctor."

"Don't you think it would be better and safer for me to go? I don't like the thought of your going alone."

"No, no. Please do just what I tell you. You do not know the way. I shall be very much quicker. If Arthur should—should—wake, he will know you, and will not be alarmed, as he might be if you were a stranger."

Margaret was gone before he could say anything more, and Renmark sat down, devoutly hoping no one would rap at the door of the room while he was there.

CHAPTER XX

MARGARET spoke caressingly to her horse, when she opened the stable door, and Gypsy replied with that affectionate, low guttural whinny which the Scotch graphically term "nickering." She patted the little animal; and, if Gypsy was surprised at being saddled and bridled at that hour of the night, no protest was made; the horse merely rubbing its nose lovingly up and down Margaret's sleeve as she buckled the different straps. There was evidently a good understanding between the two.

"No, Gyp," she whispered, "I have nothing for you to-night—nothing but hard work and quick work. Now, you mustn't make a noise till we get past the house."

On her wrist she slipped the loop of a riding-whip, which she always carried but never used. Gyp had never felt the indignity of the lash, and was always willing to do what was required, merely for a word.

Margaret opened the big gate before she saddled her horse, and there was therefore no delay in get-

ting out upon the main road, although the passing of the house was an anxious moment. She feared that if her father heard the steps or the neighing of the horse, he might come out to investigate. Halfway between her own home and Bartlett's house, she sprang lightly into the saddle.

"Now, then, Gyp."

No second word was required. Away they sped down the road towards the east, the mild June air coming sweet and cool and fresh from the distant lake, laden with the odours of the woods and the fields. The stillness was intense, broken only by the plaintive cry of the whippoorwill, America's one-phrased nightingale, or the still more weird and eerie note of a distant loon.

The houses along the road seemed deserted; no lights were shown anywhere. The wildest rumours were abroad concerning the slaughter of the day; and the population, scattered as it was, appeared to have retired into its shell. A spell of silence and darkness was over the land, and the rapid hoof-beats of the horse sounded with startling distinctness on the harder portions of the road, emphasised by intervals of complete stillness, when the fetlocks sank in the sand and progress was more difficult for the plucky little animal. The only thrill of fear that Margaret felt on her night journey, was when she entered the dark arch of an avenue of old forest trees that bordered the road, like a great, gloomy,

cathedral aisle—in the shadow of which anything might be hidden. Once the horse, with a jump of fear, started sideways and plunged ahead : Margaret caught her breath as she saw, or fancied she saw, several men stretched on the roadside, asleep or dead. Once in the open again, she breathed more freely, and, if it had not been for the jump of the horse, she would have accused her imagination of playing her a trick. Just as she had completely reassured herself, a shadow moved from the fence to the middle of the road, and a sharp voice cried,—

"Halt!"

The little horse, as if it knew the meaning of the word, planted its two front hoofs together, and slid along the ground for a moment, coming so quickly to a standstill that it was with some difficulty Margaret kept her seat. She saw, in front of her, a man holding a gun, evidently ready to fire if she attempted to disobey his command.

"Who are you, and where are you going?" he demanded.

"Oh, please let me pass," pleaded Margaret, with a tremor of fear in her voice. "I am going for a doctor—for my brother; he is badly wounded, and will perhaps die if I am delayed."

The man laughed.

"Oho!" he cried, coming closer; "a woman, is it? and a young one, too, or I'm a heathen. Now,

miss or missus, you get down. I'll have to investigate this. The brother business won't work with an old soldier. It's your lover you're riding for at this time of the night, or I'm no judge of the sex. Just slip down, my lady, and see if you don't like me better than him; remember that all cats are black in the dark. Get down, I tell you."

"If you are a soldier, you will let me go. My brother is badly wounded. I must get to the doctor."

"There's no 'must' with a bayonet in front of you. If he has been wounded, there's plenty of better men killed to-day. Come down, my dear."

Margaret gathered up the bridle-rein, but, even in the darkness, the man saw her intention.

"You can't escape, my pretty. If you try it, you'll not be hurt, but I'll kill your horse. If you move, I'll put a bullet through him."

"Kill my horse?" breathed Margaret in horror, a fear coming over her that she had not felt at the thought of danger to herself.

"Yes, missy," said the man, approaching nearer, and laying his hand on Gypsy's bridle. "But there will be no need of that. Besides, it would make too much noise, and might bring us company, which would be inconvenient. So come down quietly, like the nice little girl you are."

"If you will let me go and tell the doctor, I will come back here and be your prisoner."

The man laughed again, in low, tantalising tones. This was a good joke.

"Oh no, sweetheart. I wasn't born so recently as all that. A girl in the hand is worth a dozen a mile up the road. Now, come off that horse, or I'll take you off. This is war-time, and I'm not going to waste any more pretty talk on you."

The man, who, she now saw, was hatless, leered up at her, and something in his sinister eyes made the girl quail. She had been so quiet, that he apparently was not prepared for any sudden movement. Her right hand, hanging down at her side, had grasped the short riding-whip, and, with a swiftness that gave him no chance to ward off the blow, she struck him one stinging, blinding cut across the eyes, and then brought down the lash on the flank of her horse, drawing the animal round with her left over her enemy. With a wild snort of astonishment, the horse sprang forward, bringing man and gun down to the ground with a clatter that woke the echoes; then, with an indignant toss of the head, Gyp sped along the road like the wind. It was the first time he had ever felt the cut of a whip, and the blow was not forgiven. Margaret, fearing further obstruction on the road, turned her horse's head towards the rail-fence, and went over it like a bird. In the field, where fast going in the dark had dangers, Margaret tried to slacken the pace, but the little

horse would not have it so. He shook his head angrily whenever he thought of the indignity of that blow, while Margaret leaned over and tried to explain and beg pardon for her offence. The second fence was crossed with a clean-cut leap, and only once in the next field did the horse stumble, but quickly recovered and went on at the same break-neck gait. The next fence, gallantly vaulted over, brought them to the side-road, half a mile up which stood the doctor's house. Margaret saw the futility of attempting a reconciliation until the goal was won. There, with difficulty, the horse was stopped, and the girl struck the panes of the upper window, through which a light shone, with her riding-whip. The window was raised, and the situation speedily explained to the physician.

"I will be with you in a moment," he said.

Then Margaret slid from the saddle, and put her arms around the neck of the trembling horse. Gypsy would have nothing to do with her, and sniffed the air with offended dignity.

"It *was* a shame, Gyp," she cried, almost tearfully, stroking the glossy neck of her resentful friend; "it was, it was, and I know it; but what was I to do, Gyp? You were the only protector I had, and you *did* bowl him over beautifully; no other horse could have done it so well. It's wicked, but I do hope you hurt him, just because I had to strike you."

Gypsy was still wrathful, and indicated by a toss of the head that the wheedling of a woman did not make up for a blow. It was the insult more than the pain; and from her—there was the sting of it.

"I know—I know just how you feel, Gypsy dear; and I don't blame you for being angry. I might have spoken to you, of course, but there was no time to think, and it was really him I was striking. That's why it came down so hard. If I had said a word, he would have got out of the way, coward that he was, and then would have shot you—*you*, Gypsy. Think of it!"

If a man can be moulded in any shape that pleases a clever woman, how can a horse expect to be exempt from her influence. Gypsy showed signs of melting, whinnying softly and forgivingly.

"And it will never happen again, Gypsy—never, never. As soon as we are safe home again, I will burn that whip. You little pet, I knew you wouldn't"—

Gypsy's head rested on Margaret's shoulder, and we must draw a veil over the reconciliation. Some things are too sacred for a mere man to meddle with. The friends were friends once more, and on the altar of friendship the unoffending whip was doubtless offered as a burning sacrifice.

When the doctor came out, Margaret explained the danger of the road, and proposed that they

should return by the longer and northern way—the Concession, as it was called.

They met no one on the silent road, and soon they saw the light in the window.

The doctor and the girl left their horses tied some distance from the house, and walked together to the window, with the stealthy steps of a pair of housebreakers. Margaret listened breathlessly at the closed window, and thought she heard the low murmur of conversation. She tapped lightly on the pane, and the professor threw back the door-window.

"We were getting very anxious about you," he whispered.

"Hello, Peggy," said the boy, with a wan smile, raising his head slightly from the pillow and dropping it back again.

Margaret stooped over and kissed him.

"My poor boy! what a fright you have given me!"

"Ah, Margery, think what a fright I got myself. I thought I was going to die within sight of the house."

The doctor gently pushed Margaret from the room. Renmark waited until the examination was over, and then went out to find her.

She sprang forward to meet him.

"It is all right," he said. "There is nothing to fear. He has been exhausted by loss of blood, but

a few days' quiet will set that right. Then, all you will have to contend against will be his impatience at being kept to his room, which may be necessary for some weeks."

"Oh, I am so glad! and—and I am so much obliged to you, Mr. Renmark!"

"I have done nothing—except make blunders," replied the professor, with a bitterness that surprised and hurt her.

"How can you say that? You have done everything. We owe his life to you."

Renmark said nothing for a moment. Her unjust accusation in the earlier part of the night had deeply pained him, and he hoped for some hint of disclaimer from her. Belonging to the stupider sex, he did not realise that the words were spoken in a state of intense excitement and fear—that another woman would probably have expressed her condition of mind by fainting instead of talking, and that the whole episode had left absolutely no trace on the recollection of Margaret. At last Renmark spoke—

"I must be getting back to the tent, if it still exists. I think I had an appointment there with Yates some twelve hours ago, but up to this moment I had forgotten it. Good-night."

Margaret stood for a few moments alone, and wondered what she had done to offend him. He stumbled along the dark road, not heeding much

the direction he took, but automatically going the nearest way to the tent. Fatigue and the want of sleep were heavy upon him, and his feet were as lead. Although dazed, he was conscious of a dull ache where his heart was supposed to be, and he vaguely hoped he had not made a fool of himself. He entered the tent, and was startled by the voice of Yates—

"Hello! hello! Is that you, Stoliker?"

"No; it is Renmark. Are you asleep?"

"I guess I have been. Hunger is the one sensation of the moment. Have you provided anything to eat within the last twenty-four hours?"

"There's a bag full of potatoes here, I believe. I haven't been near the tent since early morning."

"All right; only don't expect a recommendation from me as cook. I'm not yet hungry enough for raw potatoes. What time has it got to be?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Seems as if I had been asleep for weeks. I'm the latest edition of Rip Van Winkle, and expect to find my moustache grey in the morning. I was dreaming sweetly of Stoliker, when you fell over the bunk."

"What have you done with him?"

"I'm not wide enough awake to remember. I *think* I killed him, but wouldn't be sure. So many of my good resolutions go wrong, that very likely he is alive at this moment. Ask me in the morn-

ing. What have you been prowling after all night?"

There was no answer. Renmark was evidently asleep.

"I'll ask *you* in the morning," muttered Yates drowsily — after which there was silence in the tent.

CHAPTER XXI

YATES had stubbornly refused to give up his search for rest and quiet, in spite of the discomfort of living in a leaky and battered tent. He expressed regret that he had not originally camped in the middle of Broadway, as being a quieter and less exciting spot than the place he had chosen; but, having made the choice, he was going to see the last dog hung, he said. Renmark had become less and less of a comrade. He was silent, and almost as gloomy as Hiram Bartlett himself. When Yates tried to cheer him up, by showing him how much worse another man's position might be, Renmark generally ended the talk by taking to the woods.

"Just reflect on my position," Yates would say. "Here I am dead in love with two lovely girls, both of whom are merely waiting for the word. To one of them I have nearly committed myself, which fact, to a man of my temperament, inclines me somewhat to the other. Here I am anxious to confide in you, and yet I feel that I risk a fight every time I talk about the complication. You

have no sympathy for me, Renny, when I need sympathy; while I am bubbling over with sympathy for you, and you won't have it. Now, what would you do if you were in my fix? If you would take five minutes and show me clearly which of the two girls I really ought to marry, it would help me ever so much, for then I would be sure to settle on the other. It is the indecision that is slowly but surely sapping my vitality."

By this time Renmark would have pulled his soft felt hat over his eyes, and, muttering words that would have echoed strangely in the silent halls of the university building, would plunge into the forest. Yates generally looked after his retreating figure without anger, but with mild wonder.

"Well, of all cantankerous cranks, he is the worst," he would say, with a sigh. "It is sad to see the temple of friendship tumble down about one's ears in this way." At their last talk of this kind, Yates resolved not to discuss the problem again with the professor, unless a crisis came. The crisis came in the form of Stoliker, who dropped in on Yates as the latter lay in the hammock, smoking and enjoying a thrilling romance. The camp was strewn with these engrossing, paper-covered works, and Yates had read many of them, hoping to come across a case similar to his own, but up to the time of Stoliker's visit he had not succeeded.

"Hello, Stoliker! how's things? Got the cuffs

in your pocket? Want to have another tour across country with me?"

"No. But I came to warn you. There will be a warrant out to-morrow or next day, and if I were you I would get over to the other side; though you need never say I told you. Of course, if they give the warrant to me, I shall have to arrest you; and although nothing may be done to you, still, the country is in a state of excitement, and you will at least be put to some inconvenience."

"Stoliker," cried Yates, springing out of the hammock, "you are a white man! You're a good fellow, Stoliker, and I'm ever so much obliged. If you ever come to New York, you call on me at the *Argus* office — anybody will show you where it is — and I'll give you the liveliest time you ever had in your life. It won't cost you a cent, either."

"That's all right," said the constable. "Now, if I were you I would light out to-morrow at the latest."

"I will," said Yates.

Stoliker disappeared quietly among the trees, and Yates, after a moment's thought, began energetically to pack up his belongings. It was dark before he had finished, and Renmark returned.

"Stilly," cried the reporter cheerily, "there's a warrant out for my arrest. I shall have to go to-morrow at the latest."

"What! to jail?" cried his horrified friend, his conscience now troubling him, as the parting came, for his lack of kindness to an old comrade.

"Not if the court knows herself. But to Buffalo, which is pretty much the same thing. Still, thank goodness, I don't need to stay there long. I'll be in New York before I'm many days older. I yearn to plunge into the arena once more. The still, calm peacefulness of this whole vacation has made me long for excitement again, and I'm glad the warrant has pushed me into the turmoil."

"Well, Richard, I'm sorry you have to go under such conditions. I'm afraid I have not been as companionable a comrade as you should have had."

"Oh, you're all right, Renny. The trouble with you is that you have drawn a little circle around Toronto University, and said to yourself, 'This is the world.' It isn't, you know. There is something outside of all that."

"Every man, doubtless, has his little circle. Yours is around the *Argus* office."

"Yes, but there are special wires from that little circle to all the rest of the world, and soon there will be an Atlantic cable."

"I do not hold that my circle is as large as yours; still, there is something outside of New York even."

"You bet your life there is; and, now that you are in a more sympathetic frame of mind, it is that I want to talk with you about. Those two girls are outside my little circle, and I want to bring one of them within it. Now, Renmark, which of those girls would you choose if you were me?"

The professor drew in his breath sharply, and was silent for a moment. At last he said, speaking slowly—

"I am afraid, Mr. Yates, that you do not quite appreciate my point of view. As you may think I have acted in an unfriendly manner, I will try for the first and final time to explain it. I hold that any man who marries a good woman gets more than he deserves, no matter how worthy he may be. I have a profound respect for all women, and I think that your light chatter about choosing between two is an insult to both of them. I think either of them is infinitely too good for you—or for me either."

"Oh, you do, do you? Perhaps you think that you would make a much better husband than I. If that is the case, allow me to say you are entirely wrong. If your wife was sensitive, you would kill her with your gloomy fits. I wouldn't go off in the woods and sulk, anyhow."

"If you are referring to me, I will further inform you, that I had either to go off in the woods

or knock you down. I chose the less of two evils."

"Think you could do it, I suppose? Renny, you're conceited. You're not the first man who has made such a mistake, and found he was barking up the wrong tree when it was too late for anything but bandages and arnica."

"I have tried to show you how I feel regarding this matter. I might have known I should not succeed. We will end the discussion, if you please."

"Oh no. The discussion is just beginning. Now, Renny, I'll tell you what you need. You need a good sensible wife, worse than any man I know. It is not yet too late to save you, but it soon will be. You will, before long, grow a crust on you like a snail, or a lobster, or any other cold-blooded animal that gets a shell on itself. Then nothing can be done for you. Now, let me save you, Renny, before it is too late. Here is my proposition. You choose one of those girls and marry her. I'll take the other. I'm not as unselfish as I may seem in this, for your choice will save me the worry of making up my own mind. According to your talk, either of the girls is too good for you, and for once I entirely agree with you. But let that pass. Now, which one is it to be?"

"Good God, man, do you think I am going to bargain with you about my future wife?"

"That's right, Renny. I like to hear you swear. It shows you are not yet the prig you would have folks believe. There's still hope for you, professor. Now, I'll go further with you. Although I cannot make up my mind just what to do myself, I can tell instantly which is the girl for you, and thus we solve both problems at one stroke. You need a wife who will take you in hand. You need one who will not put up with your tantrums, who will be cheerful and who will make a man of you. Kitty Bartlett is the girl. She will tyrannise over you, just as her mother does over the old man. She will keep house to the queen's taste, and delight in getting you good things to eat. Why, everything is as plain as a pike-staff. That shows the benefit of talking over a thing. You marry Kitty, and I'll marry Margaret. Come, let's shake hands over it." Yates held up his right hand, ready to slap it down on the open palm of the professor, but there was no response. Yates's hand came down to his side again, but he had not yet lost the enthusiasm of his proposal. The more he thought of it, the more fitting it seemed.

"Margaret is such a sensible, quiet, level-headed girl that, if I am as flippant as you say, she will be just the wife for me. There are depths in my character, Renmark, that you have not suspected."

"Oh, you're deep."

"I admit it. Well, a good, sober-minded woman

would develop the best that is in me. Now, what do you say, Renny?"

"I say nothing. I am going into the woods again, dark as it is."

"Ah, well," said Yates, with a sigh, "there's no doing anything with you or for you. I've tried my best; that is one consolation. Don't go away. I'll let fate decide. Here goes for a toss-up."

And Yates drew a silver half-dollar from his pocket. "Heads for Margaret!" he cried. Renmark clinched his fist, took a step forward, then checked himself, remembering that this was his last night with the man who had at least once been his friend.

Yates merrily spun the coin in the air, caught it in one hand, and slapped the other over it.

"Now for the turning-point in the lives of two innocent beings." He raised the covering hand, and peered at the coin in the gathering gloom. "Heads it is. Margaret Howard becomes Mrs. Richard Yates. Congratulate me, professor."

Renmark stood motionless as a statue, an object-lesson in self-control. Yates set his hat more jauntily on his head, and slipped the epoch-making coin into his trousers-pocket.

"Good-bye, old man," he said. "I'll see you later, and tell you all the particulars."

Without waiting for the answer, for which he probably knew there would have been little use

in delaying, Yates walked to the fence and sprang over it, with one hand on the top rail. Renmark stood still for some minutes, then quietly gathering underbrush and sticks large and small, lighted a fire, and sat down on a log, with his head in his hands.

CHAPTER XXII

YATES walked merrily down the road, whistling "Gaily the Troubadour." Perhaps there is no moment in a man's life when he feels the joy of being alive more keenly, than when he goes to propose to a girl of whose favourable answer he is reasonably sure—unless it be the moment he walks away an accepted lover. There is a magic about a June night, with its soft, velvety darkness and its sweet, mild air, laden with the perfumes of wood and field. The enchantment of the hour threw its spell over the young man, and he resolved to live a better life, and be worthy of the girl he had chosen, or rather, that fate had chosen for him. He paused a moment, leaning over the fence near the Howard homestead, for he had not yet settled in his own mind the details of the meeting. He would not go in, for in that case he knew he would have to talk, perhaps for hours, with everyone but the person he wished to meet. If he announced himself and asked to see Margaret alone, his doing so would embarrass her at the very beginning: Yates was naturally too much of a diplomate to

begin awkwardly. As he stood there, wishing chance would bring her out of the house, there appeared a light in the door-window of the room where he knew the convalescent boy lay. Margaret's shadow formed a silhouette on the blind. Yates caught up a handful of sand, and flung it lightly against the pane. Its soft patter evidently attracted the attention of the girl, for, after a moment's pause, the window opened carefully, whilst Margaret stepped quickly out and closed it, quietly standing there.

"Margaret," whispered Yates, hardly above his breath.

The girl advanced towards the fence.

"Is that *you*?" she whispered in return, with an accent on the last word that thrilled her listener. The accent told plainly as speech that the word represented the one man on earth to her.

"Yes," answered Yates, springing over the fence and approaching her.

"Oh!" cried Margaret, starting back, then checking herself, with a catch in her voice. "You—you startled me—Mr. Yates."

"Not Mr. Yates any more, Margaret, but Dick. Margaret, I wanted to see you alone. You know why I have come." He tried to grasp both her hands, but she put them resolutely behind her, seemingly wishing to retreat, yet standing her ground.

"Margaret, you must have seen long ago how it is with me. I love you, Margaret, loyally and truly. It seems as if I had loved you all my life. I certainly have since the first day I saw you."

"Oh, Mr. Yates, you must not talk to me like this."

"My darling, how else *can* I talk to you? It cannot be a surprise to you, Margaret. You must have known it long ago."

"I did not, indeed I did not — if you really mean it."

"Mean it? I never meant anything as I mean this. It is everything to me, and nothing else is anything. I have knocked about the world a good deal, I admit, but I never was in love before — never knew what love was until I met you. I tell you that"—

"Please, please, Mr. Yates, do not say anything more. If it is really true, I cannot tell you how sorry I am. I hope nothing I have said or done has made you believe that—that—oh, I do not know what to say. I never thought you could be in earnest about anything."

"You surely cannot have so misjudged me, Margaret. Others have, but I did not expect it of you. You are far and away better than I am. No one knows that so well as I. I do not pretend to be worthy of you, but I will be a devoted husband to you. Any man who gets the love of a good

woman," continued Yates earnestly, plagiarising Renmark, "gets more than he deserves; but surely such love as mine is not given merely to be scornfully trampled under foot."

"I do not treat your—you scornfully. I am only sorry if what you say is true."

"Why do you say *if* it is true? Don't you know it is true?"

"Then I am very sorry—very, *very* sorry, and I hope it is through no fault of mine. But you will soon forget me. When you return to New York"—

"Margaret," said the young man bitterly, "I shall never forget you. Think what you are doing, before it is too late. Think how much this means to me. If you finally refuse me, you will wreck my life. I am the sort of man that a woman can make or mar. Do not, I beg of you, ruin the life of the man who loves you."

"I am not a missionary," cried Margaret, with sudden anger. "If your life is to be wrecked, it will be through your own foolishness, and not from any act of mine. I think it cowardly of you to say that I am to be held responsible. I have no wish to influence your future one way or another."

"Not for good, Margaret?" asked Yates, with tender reproach.

"No. A man whose good or bad conduct depends on anyone but himself is not my ideal of a man."

"Tell me what your ideal is, so that I may try to attain it."

Margaret was silent.

"You think it will be useless for me to try?"

"As far as I am concerned, yes."

"Margaret, I want to ask you one more question. I have no right to, but I beg you to answer me. Are you in love with anyone else?"

"No," cried Margaret hotly. "How dare you ask me such a question?"

"Oh, it is not a crime—that is, being in love with someone else is not. I'll tell you why I dare ask. I swear, by all the gods, that I shall win you, —if not this year, then next; and if not next, then the year after. I was a coward to talk as I did; but I love you more now than I did even then. All I want to know is, that you are not in love with another man."

"I think you are very cruel in persisting as you do, when you have had your answer. I say no. Never! never! never!—this year nor any other year. Is not that enough?"

"Not for me. A woman's 'no' may ultimately mean 'yes.'"

"That is true, Mr. Yates," replied Margaret, drawing herself up as one who makes a final plunge. "You remember the question you asked me just now?—whether I cared for anyone else? I said 'no.' That 'no' meant 'yes.'"

He was standing between her and the window, so she could not escape by the way she came. He saw she meditated flight, and made as though he would intercept her, but she was too quick for him. She ran around the house, and he heard a door open and shut.

He knew he was defeated. Dejectedly he turned to the fence, climbing slowly over where he had leaped so lightly a few minutes before, and walked down the road, cursing his fate. Although he admitted he was a coward for talking to her as he had done about his wrecked life, yet he knew now that every word he had spoken was true. What did the future hold out to him? Not even the incentive to live. He found himself walking towards the tent, but, not wishing to meet Renmark in his present frame of mind, he turned and came out on the Ridge Road. He was tired and broken, and resolved to stay in camp until they arrested him. Then perhaps she might have some pity on him. Who was the other man she loved? or had she merely said that to give finality to her refusal? In his present mood he pictured the worst, and imagined her the wife of some neighbouring farmer — perhaps even of Stoliker. These country-girls, he said to himself, never believed a man was worth looking at unless he owned a farm. He would save his money, and buy up the whole neighbourhood; *then* she would

realise what she had missed. He climbed up on the fence beside the road, and sat on the top rail, with his heels resting on a lower one, so that he might enjoy his misery without the fatigue of walking. His vivid imagination pictured himself as the owner in a few years' time of a large section of that part of the country, with mortgages on a good deal of the remainder, including the farm owned by Margaret's husband. He saw her now, a farmer's faded wife, coming to him and begging for further time in which to pay the seven per cent. due. He knew he would act magnanimously on such an occasion, and grandly give her husband all the time he required. Perhaps then she would realise the mistake she had made. Or perhaps fame, rather than riches, would be his line. His name would ring throughout the land. He might become a great politician, and bankrupt Canada with a rigid tariff law. The unfairness of making the whole innocent people suffer for the inconsiderate act of one of them, did not occur to him at the moment, for he was humiliated and hurt. There is no bitterness like that which assails the man who has been rejected by the girl he adores, —while it lasts. His eye wandered towards the black mass of the Howard house. It was as dark as his thoughts. He turned his head slowly around, and, like a bright star of hope, there glimmered up the road a flickering light from the

Bartletts' parlour window. Although time had stopped as far as he was concerned, he was convinced it could not be very late, or the Bartletts would have gone to bed. It is always difficult to realise that the greatest of catastrophes are generally over in a few minutes. It seemed an age since he walked so hopefully away from the tent. As he looked at the light, the thought struck him that perhaps Kitty was alone in the parlour. She at least would not have treated him so badly as the other girl; and—and she was pretty, too, come to think of it. He always did like a blonde better than a brunette.

A fence rail is not a comfortable seat. It is used in some parts of the country in such a manner as to impress the sitter with the fact of its extreme discomfort, and as a gentle hint that his presence is not wanted in that immediate neighbourhood. Yates recollected this with a smile, as he slid off and stumbled into the ditch by the side of the road. His mind had been so preoccupied that he had forgotten about the ditch. As he walked along the road towards the star that guided him, he remembered he had recklessly offered Miss Kitty to the callous professor. After all, no one knew about the episode of a short time before except himself and Margaret, and he felt convinced she was not a girl to boast of her conquests. Anyhow, it didn't matter. A man is surely master of himself.

As he neared the window he looked in. People are not particular about lowering the blinds in the country. He was rather disappointed to see Mrs. Bartlett sitting there knitting, like the industrious woman she was. Still, it was consoling to note that none of the menfolks were present, and that Kitty, with her fluffy hair half concealing her face, sat reading a book he had lent to her. He rapped at the door, and it was opened by Mrs. Bartlett, with some surprise.

"For the land's sake, is that you, Mr. Yates?"

"It is."

"Come right in. Why, what's the matter with you? You look as if you had lost your best friend. Ah, I see how it is"—Yates started—"you have run out of provisions, and are very likely as hungry as a bear."

"You've hit it first time, Mrs. Bartlett. I dropped around to see if I could borrow a loaf of bread. We don't bake till to-morrow."

Mrs. Bartlett laughed.

"Nice baking you would do if you tried it. I'll get you a loaf in a minute. Are you sure one is enough?"

"Quite enough, thank you."

The good woman bustled out to the other room for the loaf, and Yates made good use of her temporary absence.

"Kitty," he whispered, "I want to see you alone

for a few minutes. I'll wait for you at the gate. Can you slip out?"

Kitty blushed very red and nodded.

"They have a warrant out for my arrest, and I'm off to-morrow before they can serve it. But I couldn't go without seeing you. You'll come, sure?"

Again Kitty nodded, after looking up at him in alarm when he spoke of the warrant. Before anything further could be said, Mrs. Bartlett came in, and Kitty was absorbed in her book.

"Won't you have something to eat now before you go back?"

"Oh no, thank you, Mrs. Bartlett. You see, the professor is waiting for me."

"Let him wait, if he didn't have sense enough to come."

"He didn't. I offered him the chance."

"It won't take us a moment to set the table. It is not the least trouble."

"Really, Mrs. Bartlett, you are very kind. I am not in the slightest degree hungry now. I am merely taking some thought of the morrow. No; I must be going, and thank you very much."

"Well," said Mrs. Bartlett, seeing him to the door, "if there's anything you want, come to me, and I will let you have it if it's in the house."

"You are too good to me," said the young man, with genuine feeling, "and I don't deserve it; but I may remind you of your promise—to-morrow."

"See that you do," she answered. "Good-night."

Yates waited at the gate, placing the loaf on the post, where he forgot it, much to the astonishment of the donor in the morning. He did not have to wait long, for Kitty came around the house somewhat shrinkingly, as one who was doing the most wicked thing that had been done since the world began. Yates hastened to meet her, clasping one of her unresisting hands in his.

"I must be off to-morrow," he began.

"I am very sorry," answered Kitty in a whisper.

"Ah, Kitty, you are not half so sorry as I am. But I intend to come back, if you will let me. Kitty, you remember that talk we had in the kitchen, when we—when there was an interruption, and when I had to go away with our friend Stoliker?"

Kitty indicated that she remembered it.

"Well, of course you know what I wanted to say to you. Of course you know what I want to say to you now."

It seemed, however, that in this he was mistaken, for Kitty had not the slightest idea, and wanted to go into the house, for it was late, and her mother would miss her.

"Kitty, you darling little humbug, you know that I love you. You must know that I have loved you ever since the first day I saw you, when you laughed at me. Kitty, I want you to marry

me and make something of me, if that is possible. I am a worthless fellow, not half good enough for a little pet like you; but, Kitty, if you will only say 'yes,' I will try, and try hard, to be a better man than I have ever been before."

Kitty did not say "yes," but she placed her disengaged hand, warm and soft, upon his, and Yates was not the man to have any hesitation about what to do next. To practical people it may seem an astonishing thing that, the object of the interview being happily accomplished, there should be any need of prolonging it; yet the two lingered there, and he told her much of his past life, and of how lonely and sordid it had been because he had no one to care for him—at which her pretty eyes filled with tears. She felt proud and happy to think she had won the first great love of a talented man's life, and hoped she would make him happy, and in a measure atone for the emptiness of the life that had gone before. She prayed that he might always be as fond of her as he was then, and resolved to be worthy of him if she could.

Strange to say, her wishes have been amply fulfilled, and few wives are as happy or as proud of their husbands as Kitty Yates. The one woman who might have put the drop of bitterness in her cup of life, merely kissed her tenderly when Kitty told her of the great joy that had come to her,

and said she was sure she would be happy; and thus, for the second time, Margaret told the thing that was not, but for once Margaret was wrong in her fears.

Yates walked to the tent a glorified man, leaving his loaf on the gate-post behind him. Few realise that it is quite as pleasant to be loved as to love. The verb "to love" has many conjugations. The earth he trod was like no other ground he had ever walked upon. The magic of the June night was never so enchanting before. He strode along with his head and his thoughts in the clouds, and the Providence that cares for the intoxicated, looked after him, and saw that the accepted lover came to no harm. He leaped the fence without even putting his hand to it, and then was brought to earth again by the picture of a man sitting, with his head in his hands, beside a dying fire.

CHAPTER XXIII

YATES stood for a moment regarding the dejected attitude of his friend.

"Hello, old man," he cried, "you have the most 'hark-from-the-tombs' appearance I ever saw. What's the matter?"

Renmark looked up.

"Oh, it's you, is it?"

"Of course, it's I. Been expecting anybody else?"

"No. I have been waiting for you, and thinking of a variety of things."

"You look it. Well, Renny, congratulate me, my boy. She's mine, and I'm hers—which are two ways of stating the same delightful fact. I'm up in a balloon, Renny. I'm engaged to the prettiest, sweetest, and most delightful girl there is from the Atlantic to the Pacific. What d'ye think of that? Say, Renmark, there's nothing on earth like it. You ought to reform and go in for being in love. It would make a man of you. Champagne isn't to be compared to it. Get up here and dance, and don't sit there like a bear nursing a sore paw. Do

you comprehend that I am to be married to the darlingest girl that lives?"

"God help her!"

"That's what I say. Every day of her life, bless her! But I don't say it quite in that tone, Renmark. What's the matter with you? One would think you were in love with the girl yourself, if such a thing were possible."

"Why is it not possible?"

"If that is a conundrum, I can answer it the first time. Because you are a fossil. You are too good, Renny; therefore dull and uninteresting. Now, there is nothing a woman likes so much as to reclaim a man. It always annoys a woman to know that the man she is interested in has a past with which she has had nothing to do. If he is wicked and she can sort of make him over, like an old dress, she revels in the process. She flatters herself she makes a new man of him, and thinks she owns that new man by right of manufacture. We owe it to the sex, Renny, to give 'em a chance at reforming us. I have known men who hated tobacco, take to smoking merely to give it up joyfully for the sake of the women they loved. Now, if a man is perfect to begin with, what is a dear, ministering angel of a woman to do with him? Manifestly, nothing. The trouble with you, Renny, is that you are too evidently ruled by a good and well-trained conscience, and naturally all women

you meet intuitively see this, and have no use for you. A little wickedness would be the making of you."

"You think, then, that if a man's impulse is to do what his conscience tells him is wrong, he should follow his impulse and not his conscience?"

"You state the case with unnecessary seriousness. I believe that an occasional blow-out is good for a man. But if you ever have an impulse of that kind, I think you should give way to it for once, just to see how it feels. A man who is too good gets conceited about himself."

"I half believe you are right, Mr. Yates," said the professor, rising. "I will act on your advice, and, as you put it, see how it feels. My conscience tells me that I should congratulate you, and wish you a long and happy life with the girl you have—I wont say chosen, but tossed up for. The natural man in me, on the other hand, urges me to break every bone in your worthless body. Throw off your coat, Yates."

"Oh, I say, Renmark, you're crazy."

"Perhaps so. Be all the more on your guard, if you believe it. A lunatic is sometimes dangerous."

"Oh, go away. You're dreaming. You're talking in your sleep. What? Fight? To-night? Nonsense!"

"Do you want me to strike you before you are ready?"

"No, Renny, no. My wants are always modest. I don't wish to fight at all, especially to-night. I'm a reformed man, I tell you. I have no desire to bid good-bye to my best girl, with a black eye to-morrow."

"Then stop talking, if you can, and defend yourself."

"It's impossible to fight here in the dark. Don't flatter yourself for a moment that I am afraid. You just spar with yourself and get limbered up, while I put some wood on the fire. This is too ridiculous."

Yates gathered some fuel, and managed to coax the dying embers into a blaze.

"There," he said, "that's better. Now, let me have a look at you. In the name of wonder, Renny, what do you want to fight me for to-night?"

"I refuse to give my reason."

"Then I refuse to fight. I'll run, and I can beat you in a foot-race any day in the week. Why, you're worse than her father. He at least let me know why he fought me."

"Whose father?"

"Kitty's father, of course—my future father-in-law. And that's another ordeal ahead of me. I haven't spoken to the old man yet, and I need all my fighting grit for that."

"What are you talking about?"

"Isn't my language plain? It usually is."

"To whom are you engaged? As I understand your talk, it is to Miss Bartlett. Am I right?"

"Right as rain, Renny. This fire is dying down again. Say, can't we postpone our fracas until daylight? I don't want to gather any more wood. Besides, one of us is sure to be knocked into the fire, and thus ruin whatever is left of our clothes. What do you say?"

"Say? I say I am an idiot."

"Hello! reason is returning, Renny. I perfectly agree with you."

"Thank you. Then you did not propose to Mar —to Miss Howard?"

"Now, you touch upon a sore spot, Renmark, that I am trying to forget. You remember the unfortunate toss-up; in fact, I think you referred to it a moment ago, and you were justly indignant about it at the time. Well, I don't care to talk much about the sequel; but, as you know the beginning, you will have to know the end, because I want to wring a sacred promise from you. You are never to mention this episode of the toss-up, or of my confession, to any living soul. The telling of it might do harm, and it couldn't possibly do any good. Will you promise?"

"Certainly. But do not tell me unless you wish to."

"I don't exactly yearn to talk about it, but it is

better you should understand how the land lies, so you won't make any mistake. Not on *my* account, you know, but I would not like it to come to Kitty's ears. Yes, I proposed to Margaret — first. She wouldn't look at me. Can you credit that?"

"Well, now that you mention it, I"—

"Exactly. I see you *can* credit it. Well, I couldn't at first; but Margaret knows her own mind, there's no question about *that*. Say! she's in love with some other fellow. I found out that much."

"You asked her, I presume."

"Well, it's my profession to find out things; and, naturally, if I do that for my paper, it is not likely I am going to be behindhand when it comes to myself. She denied it at first, but admitted it afterwards, and then bolted."

"You must have used great tact and delicacy."

"See here, Renmark, I'm not going to stand any of your sneering. I told you this was a sore subject with me. I'm not telling you because I like to, but because I have to. Don't put me in fighting humour, Mr. Renmark. If *I* talk fight, I won't begin for no reason and then back out for no reason. I'll go on."

"I'll be discreet, and beg to take back all I said. What else?"

"Nothing else. Isn't that enough? It was more than enough for me—at the time. I tell you, Ren-

mark, I spent a pretty bad half-hour sitting on the fence and thinking about it."

"So long as that?"

Yates rose from the fire indignantly.

"I take that back too," cried the professor hastily. "I didn't mean it."

"It strikes me, you've become awfully funny all of a sudden. Don't you think it's about time we took to our bunks? It's late."

Renmark agreed with him, but did not turn in. He walked to the friendly fence, laid his arms along the top rail, and gazed at the friendly stars. He had not noticed before how lovely the night was, with its impressive stillness, as if the world had stopped, as a steamer stops in mid ocean. After quieting his troubled spirit with the restful stars, he climbed the fence and walked down the road, taking little heed of the direction. The still night was a soothing companion. He came at last to a sleeping village of wooden houses, and through the centre of the town ran a single line of rails, an iron link connecting the unknown hamlet with all civilisation. A red and a green light glimmered down the line, giving the only indication that a train ever came that way. As he went a mile or two farther, the cool breath of the great lake made itself felt, and after crossing a field he suddenly came upon the water, finding all further progress in that direction barred. Huge sand dunes formed the

shore, covered with sighing pines. At the foot of the dunes stretched a broad beach of firm sand, dimly visible in contrast with the darker water ; and at long intervals fell the light ripple of the languid summer waves, running up the beach with a half-asleep whisper, that became softer and softer until it was merged in the silence beyond. Far out on the dark waters, a point of light, like a floating star, showed where a steamer was slowly making her way ; and so still was the night that he felt, rather than heard, her pulsating engines. It was the only sign of life visible from that enchanted bay—the bay of the silver beach.

Renmark threw himself down on the soft sand at the foot of a dune. The point of light gradually worked its way to the west, following, doubtless unconsciously, the star of empire, and disappeared around the headland, taking with it a certain vague sense of companionship. But the world is very small, and a man is never quite as much alone as he thinks he is. Renmark heard the low hoot of an owl among the trees, which cry he was astonished to hear answered from the water. He sat up and listened. Presently there grated on the sand the keel of a boat, and someone stepped ashore. From the woods there emerged the shadowy forms of three men. Nothing was said, but they got silently into the boat,—which might have been Charon's craft for all he could see of it. The rattle

of the rowlocks and the plash of oars followed, while a voice cautioned the rowers to make less noise. It was evident that some belated fugitives were eluding the authorities of both countries. Renmark thought, with a smile, that if Yates were in his place he would at least give them a fright. A sharp command to an imaginary company to load and fire would travel far on such a night, and would give the rowers a few moments of great discomfort. Renmark, however, did not shout, but treated the episode as part of the mystical dream, and lay down on the sand again. He noticed that the water in the east seemed to feel the approach of morning even before the sky. Gradually the day dawned, a slowly lightening grey at first, until the coming sun spattered a filmy cloud with gold and crimson. Renmark watched the glory of the sunrise, took one lingering look at the curved beauty of the bay shore, shook the sand from his clothing, and started back for the village and the camp beyond.

The village was astir when he reached it. He was surprised to see Stoliker on horseback in front of one of the taverns. Two assistants were with him, also seated on horses. The constable seemed disturbed by the sight of Renmark, but he was there to do his duty.

"Hello!" he cried, "you're up early. I have a warrant for the arrest of your friend: I suppose you won't tell me where he is?"

"You can't expect me to give any information that will get a friend into trouble, can you?—especially as he has done nothing."

"That's as may turn out before a jury," said one of the assistants gravely.

"Yes," assented Stoliker, winking quietly at the professor. "That is for judge and jury to determine—not you."

"Well," said Renmark, "I will not inform about anybody, unless I am compelled to do so, but I may save you some trouble by telling where I have been and what I have seen. I am on my way back from the lake. If you go down there, you will still see the mark of a boat's keel on the sand, and probably footprints. A boat came over from the other shore in the night, and a man got on board. I don't say who the man was, and I had nothing to do with the matter in any way except as a spectator. That is all the information I have to give."

Stoliker turned to his assistants, and nodded. "What did I tell you?" he asked. "We were right on his track."

"You said the railroad," grumbled the man who had spoken before.

"Well, we were within two miles of him. Let us go down to the lake and see the traces. Then we can return the warrant."

Renmark found Yates still asleep in the tent. He prepared breakfast without disturbing him.

When the meal was ready, he roused the reporter and told him of his meeting with Stoliker, advising him to get back to New York without delay.

Yates yawned sleepily.

"Yes," he said, "I've been dreaming it all out. I'll get father-in-law to tote me out to Fort Erie, to-night."

"Do you think it will be safe to put it off so long?"

"Safer than trying to get away during the day. After breakfast, I'm going down to the Bartlett homestead. Must have a talk with the old folks, you know. I'll spend the rest of the day making up for that interview by talking with Kitty. Stoliker will never search for me there, and now that he thinks I'm gone, he will likely make a visit to the tent. Stoliker is a good fellow, but his strong point is duty, you know; and if he's certain I'm gone, he'll give his country the worth of its money by searching. I won't be back for dinner: so you can put in your time reading my Dime Novels. I make no reflections on your cooking, Renny, now that the vacation is over; but I have my preferences, and they incline towards a final meal with the Bartletts. If I were you I'd have a nap. You look tired out."

"I am," said the professor.

Renmark intended to lie down for a few moments until Yates was clear of the camp, after which he

determined to pay a visit: but Nature, when she got him locked up in sleep, took her revenge. He did not hear Stoliker and his satellites search the premises, just as Yates had predicted they would, and when he finally awoke he found, to his astonishment, that it was nearly dark. But he was all the better for his sleep, and he attended to his personal appearance with more than ordinary care.

Old Hiram Bartlett accepted the situation with the patient and grim stolidity of a man who takes a blow dealt him by a Providence known by him to be inscrutable. What he had done to deserve it was beyond his comprehension. He silently hitched up his horses, and, for the first time in his life, drove into Fort Erie without any reasonable excuse for going there. He tied his team at the usual corner, after which he sat at one of the taverns and drank strong waters that had no apparent effect on him. He even went so far as to smoke two native cigars; and a man who can do that can do anything. To bring up a daughter who would deliberately accept a man from "the States," and to have a wife who would aid and abet such an action, giving comfort and support to the enemy, seemed to him traitorous to all the traditions of 1812, or any other date in the history of the two countries. At times, wild ideas of getting blind full, and going home to break every breakable thing in the house, rose in his mind; but prudence

whispered that he had to live all the rest of his life with his wife, and he realised that this scheme of vengeance had its drawbacks. Finally, he untied his patient team, after paying his bill, and drove silently home, not having returned, even by a nod, any of the salutations tendered to him that day. He was somewhat relieved to find no questions were asked, and that his wife recognised the fact that he was passing through a crisis. Nevertheless there was a steely glitter in her eye under which he uneasily quailed, for it told him a line had been reached which it would not be well for him to cross. She forgave, but it must not go any further.

When Yates kissed Kitty good-night at the gate, he asked her, with some trepidation, whether she had told anyone of their engagement.

"No one but Margaret," said Kitty.

"And what did she say?" asked Yates, as if, after all, her opinion was of no importance.

"She said she was sure I should be happy, and she knew you would make a good husband."

"She's rather a nice girl, is Margaret," remarked Yates, with the air of a man willing to concede good qualities to a girl other than his own, but indicating, after all, that there was but one on earth for him.

"She is a lovely girl," said Kitty enthusiastically. "I wonder, Dick, when you knew her, why you ever fell in love with me."

"The idea! I haven't a word to say against Margaret; but, compared with my girl"—

And he finished his sentence with a practical illustration of his frame of mind.

As he walked alone down the road, he reflected that Margaret had acted very handsomely, and he resolved to drop in and wish her good-bye. But as he approached the house his courage began to fail him, and he thought it better to sit on the fence, near the place where he had sat the night before, and think it over. It took a good deal of thinking. But as he sat there, it was destined that Yates should receive some information which would simplify matters. Two persons came slowly out of the gate, in the gathering darkness. They strolled together up the road past him, absorbed in themselves. When directly opposite the reporter, Renmark put his arm around Margaret's waist, and Yates nearly fell off the fence. He held his breath until they were safely out of hearing, then slid down and crawled along in the shadow until he came to the side-road, up which he walked, thoughtfully pausing every few moments to remark, "Well, I'll be"—but speech seemed to have failed him; he could get no further.

He stopped at the fence and leaned against it, gazing for the last time at the tent, glimmering white, like a misshapen ghost, among the sombre trees. He had no energy left to climb over.

"Well, I'm a chimpanzee," he muttered to himself at last. "The highest bidder can have me, with no upset price. Dick Yates, I wouldn't have believed it of you. *You* a newspaper man? *You* a reporter from 'way back? *You* up to snuff? Yates, I'm ashamed to be seen in your company! Go back to New York, and let the youngest reporter in from a country newspaper scoop the daylight out of you. To think that this thing has been going on right under your well-developed nose, and you never saw it,—worse, never had the faintest suspicion of it; that it was thrust at you twenty times a day,—nearly got your stupid head smashed on account of it; yet you bleated away like the innocent little lamb that you are, and never even suspected! Dick, you're a three-sheet-poster fool in coloured ink. And to think that both of them know all about the first proposal!—*Both* of them! Well, thank heaven, Toronto is a long way from New York."

THE END.

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